



**RBL Y SERVICES (GARATS HAY) BRANCH Newsletter No: 2/ April 2017.
Originally sent as a bulk email to all members on 9 April 2017**

A packed newsletter this time with news about the easyfundraising scheme, the latest on the branch Voluntary Contact List, details of a RBL fundraising trek from Spain to France and a number of policy issues from RBL HQ at Haig House. Please note that replies are not expected but if you do have anything you want to raise with your branch committee your first point of contact is the branch secretary.



1. Our **easyfundraising** on-line shopping project continues to grow and we now have signed up 64 members. Thanks and Congratulations to the 64th member who has joined us during the first week in April. Congratulations and thanks also go to all who have already raised funds, particularly the top 5 on the leader board ! There are a couple of intriguing nicknames on that list. I would love to know who some of you are.

Our Treasurer has just received payment of £141.83 for the fourth quarter of the financial year 16/17. This brings the total raised so far, since we started the scheme in April last year, to £536.01

Ladies and Gentlemen – this scheme really is ‘money for nothing’ . All you need to do is create an **easyfundraising** account and do your on-line shopping via that, rather than directly through the on-line retailer. It will add less than 30 seconds to the time it takes you to make an on-line purchase.

To sign up to **easyfundraising** go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk> and select **RBL Y Services (Garats HaY)** Branch as your chosen worthy cause

Dennis Weir

RBL Branch Poppy Appeal Co-ord

2. FREEDOM TRAIL



RBL HQ at Haig House advises that (as at 4 April 2017) there are 16 places left to fill on the RBL [Freedom Trail](#), a 4 day trek through the Pyrenees from 18th – 24th September. The Freedom Trail ('Chemin de la liberté) follows one of the toughest WW2 escape routes from Nazi-occupied France into Spain, passing memorials of the fallen along the way. The trek is beautiful and poignant, but is

also very demanding and requires a lot of training and fundraising to take part. We're therefore promoting it early to give participants plenty of time. **Keen, enthusiastic and FIT branch members are encouraged to have a go!**

DATE: Monday 18 September 2017 - Sunday 24 September 2017

LOCATION: France to Spain

Local people risked their lives to help thousands of allied Service men and women, and refugees, flee to safety along the Freedom Trail (le Chemin de la Liberté). Follow in their footsteps on this once-in-a-lifetime challenge.

THE ROUTE

This beautiful and demanding trek in the Pyrenees takes you from France over the high mountains into Spain. Over four days of walking on remote trails, you will reach heights of over 2500m, passing memorials and plaques dedicated to the bravery of allied Service men and women and refugees who undertook the same paths in fear of their lives. We'll also pass a British Halifax bomber whose wreckage remains on the mountain. The route is steep and arduous, taking you through spectacular scenery of cirques, rocky ridges, beech forests and mountain lakes.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

This trek is all-inclusive. Due to its technical nature, the trek requires experienced leaders and local crew to enable participants to fully experience the landscape.

The cost of this trip includes:

- Transport: return flights from London to Toulouse; coach journey from Toulouse to Saint-Girons; coach journey from Esterrri d'Àneu, Spain (the trek finish point) back to Ax les Thermes, France; coach journey from Ax les Thermes to Toulouse
- Camping equipment including tents (not including sleeping bag or sleeping mat)
- Meals for the duration of the trek: breakfasts including cereals, toast, eggs and fruit, packed lunches while trekking, three-course dinners in the evenings
- All accommodation for the duration of the trip: we stay in a mix of family-run

- hotels, mountain refuges and camping sites
- Experienced tour leaders and support crew of mountain guides and drivers
- An exclusive discount code for one week of free training with British Military Fitness
- Fundraising support from a dedicated point of contact at The Royal British Legion

COST

For this once in a lifetime experience we offer two fundraising options:
Register now for just £199, then:

- Raise **£2,100** in sponsorship OR
- Pay the **£1,100** tour cost yourself and raise **£999** in sponsorship

We will need to have received £1,299 from you (£1,100 trip cost + £199 registration fee) by Friday 30 June. You'll then have the rest of the year to raise the remaining sponsorship, due on 18 December.

WE'LL SUPPORT YOU

Although fundraising may seem daunting, we will be here to help every step of the way. We'll start by sending you a fundraising pack full of ideas to help you reach your target. We'll be in regular contact with fundraising tips, and if you are struggling or have any concerns, just give us a call and we'll be happy to help.

Signing up early will give you plenty of time to hit your sponsorship target, and will allow you to hold small fundraising goals for each month. This could be as simple as holding a dinner party for your friends and charging all attendees £10, or organising a sweepstake at work.

You can download a full itinerary of the trek at the foot of: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise/treks-and-walks/freedom-trail/> or for more information contact the team on 0333 011 4500 or email events@britishlegion.org.uk.

3. Branch Voluntary Contact List

I am pleased to advise that the Branch Voluntary Contact List has, since its launch, increased to 103 members

Access to this list is conditional on the information it contains being used solely for the purposes of furthering the aims of the Royal British Legion by supporting membership growth and encouraging fellowship between members of the Branch. The information is not to be passed on to anyone who is not a member of Y Services (Garats Hay) Branch of the Royal British Legion or used for any other purpose.

To obtain further information such as an email address of a member whose details are contained in the list, please contact the custodian of the list, our Membership Secretary, Pete Derrick on email: yserVICESrbl@btinternet.com who will then seek permission to pass on the details and when received, send them to the enquirer. If there are any errors or if you wish to add or amend your details, please send an email to: member.book@btinternet.com giving your membership number, first name, surname, town and county of your address.

Eric Sambell, Branch President

Branch Voluntary Contact List April 2017

First name	Surname	Town	County	Country
Bob	Allum	Bracebridge Heath	Lincs	
Carol	Armstrong	Cambridge	Cambs	
Euan Dhugal	Baker	Boston	Lincs	
Paul	Ball	Borehamwood	Herts	
Paul	Ball	Borehamwood	Herts	
Edward	Bellerby	Southampton	Hants	
Peter	Benstead	Carshalton	Surrey	
Nick	Berry	Welton	Lincs	
Chris	Boyd	Lot et Garonne		France
Robin	Bradshaw	Northampton	Notts	
Keith	Breen	Loughborough	Leics	
Bob	Brown	Cheltenham	Glos	
Denis	Byrne	Newton Aycliffe	Co Durham	
David	Carter	Bletchley	Bucks	
Tim	Chapman	Warrington	Cheshire	
Judith	Charlesworth	Harrogate	Yorks	
John	Clark	Hopeman	Moray	

Catherine	Clark	Hopeman	Moray	
Jan (Duffy)	Claughton	Gillingham	Dorset	
Ian	Coghlan	Lydney	Glos	
Gerard	Cowin	Wimblington	Cambs	
Pete	Derrick	Houghton Conquest	Beds	
Ian	Ellinor	Scarborough	Yorks	
John	Evans	Newton-Le-Willows	Merseyside	
Graham	Fairclough	Oxford/ Swindon	??	
David	Fairhurst	St Helens	Merseyside	
David (Lofty)	Fairhurst,	St Helens,	Merseyside	
Martin	Farmer	Lincoln	Lincs	
Martin	Foster	Cheltenham	Glos	
Bob	Francis	Cheltenham	Glos	
Mike	Frankish	Lincoln	Lincs	
Paul	Friend	Loughborough	Leics	
Fiona	Galbraith	Stuttgart		Germany
Sandra (Sandie)	Gemmell	Dunoon	Argyll	Scotland
Rachelle	Goldberg	Ealing	Middlesex	
Patrick (Tiny)	Greetham	Coventry	W Midlands	
Robert	Gunther	Scunthorpe	Lincs	
Keith	Hall	Walcott	Lincs	
Pat	Hannan	Inverness		Scotland
Tom	Hardingham	Loughborough	Leics	
Mathew	Harris	Sleaford	Lincs	
Ted	Haslam	Newton Abbot	Devon	
Terry	Hawes	Costa Blanca		Spain
Cas	Hayes	Newark	Notts	
Steve	Haynes	South Milford	N Yorkshire	
Ian	Henderson	Swindon	Wilts	
Colin	Hill	Ibstock	Leics	
Clive	Honor	Ely	Cambs	
Ann	Irving	Loughborough	Leics	
Roy	Isbell	Marksfield	Leics	
Roger (Taff)	James	Cardiff		Wales
Steve	Jarvis	Loughborough	Leics	
Gerry	Kane	Loughborough	Leics	
Clive	Kidd	Fareham	Hants	
Henrik	Kiertzner	Cirencester	Glos	
Rick	Kiralfy	Leven	Fife	
Paul	Lancaster	Nottingham	Notts	
Dave	Lawrence	Coventry	W Midlands	

Andy	Marchant	Lincoln	Lincs	
Andrew	Marshall	Bathgate	W Lothian	
Rodney (Rod)	Maunder	Ware	Herts	
Dave	McCreath	Wisbech	Cambs	
Jim	McDermott	Coalville	Leics	
Linda	McDermott	Coalville	Leics	
John	Mellors	Buckingham	Bucks	
Darrell	Middleton	Lincoln	Lincs	
Geoffrey	Milward	Mansfield	Notts	
Tony	Moore	Melton Mowbray	Leics	
Dave	Morrison	Cheltenham	Glos	
Al	Moyes	Andover	Hants	
John	Neal	Sleaford	Lincs	
Bob	Oldfield	Great Yarmouth	Norfolk	
Lyn	Oldfield	Great Yarmouth	Norfolk	
Michael (Paddy)	Payne	Ripley	Derbys	
Sarah	Redford	Saltash	Cornwall	
Robert	Rhodes	Sleaford	Lincs	
Lloyd	Richards	Lincoln	Lincs	
Jean	Richards	Lincoln	Lincs	
John	Richardson	Wolfenbuttel		Germany
Keith	Ring	Chandlers Ford	Hants	
Barrie	Rosewarn		Glos	
James	Ruddock-Broyd	Beckenham	Kent	
Eric	Sambell	Chippenham	Wilts	
Kay	Sambell	Chippenham	Wilts	
Mike	Shail	San Cayetano	Murcia	Spain
Pip	Shail	San Cayetano	Murcia	Spain
Michael	Simpson	Bielefeld		Germany
Terry	Stanley	Southampton	Hants	
Dave	Street	Tewksbury	Glos	
John	Swann	Tollerton	Notts	
Linda	Swann	Tollerton	Notts	
John	Tucker	Farnham	Surrey	
Dennis	Underwood	Leicester	Leics	
Stephen (Farmer)	Vaughan	Lincoln	Lincs	
Den	Vipond	Sunderland	Tyne & Wear	
Ron	Watson	Sleaford	Lincs	
Arthur	Weaver	Loughborough	Leics	
Dennis	Weir	Lincoln	Lincs	
Jennifer	Weir	Lincoln	Lincs	

Peter	Westwell	Whitchurch	Shropshire
Bob	White	Coalville	Leics
Joy	White	Coalville	Leics
Malcolm	Wiltshire	Crawley	Sussex

4. Board of Trustee Elections

As you will know the RBL recently held the first round of elections to select candidates for soon to be vacant RBL Trustee positions. 90 branch members took part in the electronic vote to select our preferred four candidates and the results are:

John Clark (74)

Denise Edgar (42)

Paul Harris (38)

Joseph Falzon (30)

Branch Chairman, Nick Berry, has now endorsed these selections on behalf of the branch and has cast the branch vote in accordance with the above prioritised result.

Watch this space to see if our very own John Clarke is elevated to the Board of Trustees.

5. The Veteran's Gateway

The following is the text of a letter sent recently to all Branch Chairman and explains the launch of a new RBL initiative, the **Veterans' Gateway** and this is reproduced here for your information

Dear colleagues,

3 April 2017

Today the Veterans' Gateway service goes live.

As part of our Gateway Strategy, the Legion is working to make it easier for those we support to understand and use our services by working in collaboration and

partnership with other organisations. The Veterans' Gateway is the first step in this journey.

[Veterans' Gateway](#) aims to be the first point of contact for veterans or their families seeking information, advice and support.

As the gateway to a network of expert partners – both within and outside of the Armed Forces sector – Veterans' Gateway will connect users with the right support organisation for their needs, quickly and easily. This simplification of the system has been brought about by a consortium of partners working collaboratively and led by the Legion.

The consortium is made up of the Legion, SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity, Poppyscotland and Combat Stress, with funding from The Covenant Fund. Our connection with referral partners such as Shelter, Mind and other specialists allows us to be the gateway to a range of support that veterans and their families might need but struggle to find.

The [website](#) itself covers the complex array of topics that the community faces, providing a self-help functionality where users can search for the matters concerning them. It highlights the partners Veterans' Gateway can connect users with and the main phone line users can call - 0808 802 1212.

Although the service is up and running from today, the full public launch will be on 25 May 2017. This phase of 'Go Live' between now and then is important so we can test our functionality before the wider launch.

In the meantime, please [visit the site](#) and follow our social media channels for further updates.

- twitter.com/VeteransGateway
- facebook.com/VeteransGateway

Best wishes,

Mark Collins

M A Collins
AD Veterans' Gateway

6. Northern Ireland in the News

The next two items are copies of letters from the National Chairman Terry Whittles, they are self explanatory and are reproduced here for information and compliance as appropriate.

NOTE: Regretfully some of the final portion of this file failed to convert and was lost during transfer to pdf. Awfully sorry – Editor.

Patron Her Majesty The Queen



Dear Chairmen

I am aware that some members have made enquiries about the Legion's investigation of some UK veterans in relation to their possible involvement in Northern Ireland. I am writing today to outline the Legion's position on parades held in protest at these investigations.

The Legion is fully aware of recent press coverage and public concern against some UK veterans who served in Northern Ireland. As this is an ongoing criminal investigation, the Legion is unable to comment on individual cases, and the Legion should not interfere in what is a criminal legal process.

The Legion welcomes the fact that UK veterans affected by the legacy issue have free MOD legal representation. We also note that, on 22 February, under the terms of the Stormont House Agreement, the Government would look at the legacy incidents prior to the Belfast Agreement. The UK Government has also agreed to expect the Police Service of Northern Ireland's (PSNI) Legacy Investigation to proceed in chronological order.

Of course, the Legion must and will support all our veterans. We will not support criminal prosecutions, as to do so would be inconsistent with our duty to provide a broad range of welfare support and services to all members. Any individuals or family members who find themselves affected by the legacy issue are encouraged to contact us if they feel the Legion can be of any assistance.

The Legion is aware of plans for marches to take place in Northern Ireland in protest at the investigation of some UK veterans' alleged involvement in the legacy issue.

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