

Branch easyfundraising donations hit £3000.00



**Support us through
easyfundraising**

See story on page 5.

**Update on Legion
developments from
Legion Chairman
Jason Coward
pages 3 and 4**



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**Gill Bennett on the
run again! See story
on page 2**

Branch Member, Gill Bennett on the run – Again!

Our roving reporter spoke to Gill as she prepares for yet another sponsored run in aid of the Poppy Appeal.

So, yesI am running the Great North Run this year, Sunday 8 September 2024!! Crikey that's come around quickly! My running wave (Pink) starts at approximately 1155 hrs onwards. The elite women start at 1030 hrs and the men's race starts at 1055 hrs. My running number is 50398 and I'm planning to run it in about 3 hours. I have set up online sponsorship with a target of **£1,000** (details below). Any support members can give will be greatly appreciated and all donations will, of course, go to the Legion's Poppy appeal. I'll be running carrying the old faithful bucket the whole way round (13.1 miles) and wearing my RBL running jersey.... the aim is to stand out in the crowd!..... and, of course, to collect as I go.



I know it's hard to believe but I turned the ripe young age of 60 just a few weeks ago, and I'm still bonkers enough to challenge myself, even when I'm feeling a bit creaky in the pins!! My military career spans 5 decades, having joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1984, being part of the first tranche of women to volunteer for sea service in the Royal Navy in 1990, deploying all over the world as a Cryptologic Technician, and finally retiring in July 2024. This is me doing my bit to pay something back for a wonderful career that I am really proud of. Having seen so much change along the way, I hope I can pay something forward and help others in the process.

This will be my first Great North Run! Can't believe I've not run this fabulous event before. Being a "mouthy Southy" I've completed several Great South Runs but that's only 10 miles and I did not complete any of them carrying a bucket the whole way round!! I'll be taking on this challenge with my bucket in the hope I can raise a bit more money for the Royal British Legion, which continues to work so hard to support, help and assist my sisters and brothers in the Armed Forces community, veterans and their families, especially when the going gets tough.

I am proud to be part of the Association of Wrens Family and I've been a member of my RBL Branch, the Y-Services for over 10 years. I know how hard they work in support of the annual Poppy Appeal.

Hopefully by running (ahem) shuffle-jogging with my trusty bucket on this my first Great North Run, I can add a few more coffers to the Appeal and have a truly magical experience in the process. And of course, get to meet a few of the wonderful people of the North East. Thank You, so much xx

Please see the link below to my Great North Run sponsorship page.
<https://AJBellgreatnorthrun2024.enthuse.com/pf/gillian-bennett-dbb42>

Editor's note: I am sure we all wish Gill the very best. Good luck on 8 September Gill, we will keep a lookout for on TV, so don't forget to smile!

An update from
the Legion
Chairman

Part 1



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FROM: National Chair's Office

27th August 2024

Dear Branch Chairs,

As part of our commitment to keeping everyone better informed, I write to update you on a number of key developments in how we are leading our charity into the future.

- 1. Future strategy:** At this year's Annual Conference in Newport, our Director General Mark explained that one of our top priorities was to start work on a new strategy for RBL. The Board of Trustees and the Executive Board have now started a process to define and shape the charity for the next 5-10 years to better understand and meet the challenges of our Armed Forces Community. We expect this process to take around nine months, which will allow us to launch the future strategy at Annual Conference in Harrogate next May. Along the way, we will also be seeking inputs and discussion about the future shape of the RBL, and will share thinking at the County Chair seminars, at County Conferences early in 2025, and through other comms channels. I will provide regular updates on progress in my letter shared after each Board of Trustees meeting.
- 2. Building unity – the Newport Agreement:** Our focus on improving how we all work together for the good of our beneficiaries has continued. As I mentioned in my speech at Conference in May, we have been working on building a new understanding and a new commitment across the three key leadership groups - the Board of Trustees, the Executive Board and the Membership Council. Members of each of these groups met a number of times earlier this year and have agreed a written set of commitments, which we are calling the Newport Agreement. It has now been signed off by the Trustees, Mark and his team and the Membership Council and we will share this for discussion at September's County Chairs meeting before sharing it more widely. I wish to take this moment to thank all those who gave their time and experience to help shape this Agreement, and believe it creates a significant and clear marker in our readiness to work better together.
- 3. Future leadership:** We are committed to inviting more people to get involved in the leadership of our charity at all levels, whether at local, regional or national level. Having looked into why vacancies are often so difficult to fill, we have concluded two things: (a) that the needs and expectations of each role are not fully clear and therefore understood, and (b) that we don't do enough to equip potential leaders with what is needed to succeed in these roles. We are working on solving both of these issues, and we launched the new Aspire Leadership programme for members earlier this year, which a number of you have already attended. This programme has proved highly valuable and the feedback has been strongly positive. I would encourage all of you with an interest in taking on leadership positions to apply to future programmes.

- 4. Future elections:** We are finalising the packs in the coming weeks for one of the most significant rounds of elections across the leadership of the RBL. To take up office from May 2025, we will be seeking a new National Chair and National Vice Chair, together with Trustee and Membership Council positions. We have reviewed the elections process to make our expectations as clear as possible for these critical leadership roles; to provide information and support to anyone who might be considering standing for election; and to help them demonstrate through the application process how their RBL or wider experience might stand them in good stead. To achieve this, and following the lead set by the Board of Trustees in recent years, each of the candidates will be asked to go through an assessment phase ahead of standing for your votes. Our ultimate aim, and our responsibility, is to ensure that the Board of Trustees and the Membership Council are as effective and capable as possible; and through the new Aspire Programme, and through the added information and support available, we want to encourage leaders from across RBL membership to come forward. A series of optional briefing days for all interested parties will be held this Autumn, both in-person at Haig House and via MS Teams. For early diary notice for anyone interested, the dates are: Wednesday 16 October; Wednesday 13 November; and Wednesday 11 December 2024.
- 5. Future governance changes:** You may remember that last year the Board of Trustees proposed some changes to our Royal Charter in respect of how the National Chair is appointed, and to the role of the National Vice Chair. Annual Conference 2023 did not support these changes. The Board has listened carefully, and reflected further, and decided against bringing these Charter changes to next year's Annual Conference. Further, we are not progressing any work on changing the size and make-up of the Board, which was also under consideration last year. The Board remains committed to improving our governance over time, but I believe this is the right decision for our governance and the right decision for the unity of our charity as we reshape our strategy and work to rebuild trust , and strengthen leadership capability, across all groups across the RBL.

As ever, please come back with any queries or thoughts on what I have shared here - we are always stronger as a charity when more people are heard and have the chance to challenge what's going on. I would ask that you share this letter with your local members who may not have email access.

Update from the
Legion Chairman

Part 2

Yours,



Jason Coward
NATIONAL CHAIR

Chairman's message

Dear Members,

In the big wide world, August tends to be somewhat quiet news-wise with lots of folk away on holiday. Legion-wise and in particular our branch, we continue to attract a trickle of new members and our Standard Bearer has been kept busy with funerals and commemorative events.

As you will have seen on page 2 branch member Gill Bennett is once again donning her plimsolls to tackle the Great North Run in September and I hope many of you will dig deep and sponsor her.

The update letter on Legion Policy from Legion Chairman Jason Coward is included as its contents may well be of interest to members

The big news is the success of our involvement with the easyfundraising scheme; who could have imagined back in March 2016 that such a huge sum would accrue and all for free.

Our next event will be over remembrance weekend in November with our AGM on the Saturday and a service at St Mary in the Elms in Old Woodhouse on the Sunday, full details in later issues of this newsletter.

Kind regards to one and all.

Jim McDermott, Branch Chairman

EASYFUNDRAISING - tops £3,000

Our RBL Y Services Branch registered with the **easyfundraising** scheme in early 2016. Since then we have been raising FREE donations for the Poppy Appeal.

In early August easyfundraising organisers advised that we had topped the **£3,000 mark**, a great achievement. Well done and thank you to all 136 members who regularly make purchases online via easyfundraising. If you have not already signed up and would like to donate to the Poppy appeal, for FREE every time you make an online purchase, you can find details of easyfundraising and sign up as a supporter at:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pmc&utm_content=gs-email1

**Branch
Membership now
at
445**

Editor's Note: Contributions to the Branch Newsletter are always welcome on topics members think will be of general interest. We aim to provide uplifting stories as well as Branch news and attempt not to duplicate material sent from RBL HQ. Copy should be sent by email to the editor at:

jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com Text to be unformatted in MS Word. Photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately please, as JPEGs.

Branch Standard on Parade

A fairly busy month this time, all concentrated into 5 busy days. The first, on Wednesday 14th August, a sad event, the funeral of one of our Branch members – Jan Claughton, known affectionately as “Duffy” or “Duffs” and who was known by many Branch members and more from the “Y” World. I was asked to perform the usual funeral honours comprising escort to the cortege and bearer party, as well as the ‘Act of Homage’ at the end of the ceremony, to the strains of ‘The Last Post’ and ‘Reveille.’

Three days later, on Saturday 17th August, I paraded at the National Memorial Arboretum at World War Two related commemorations for VJ-Day, the Chindits and the Burma Star associations.

Of particular note during the Chindits service was a fly-past by a US Air force C-130 aircraft from the modern-day successor unit that provided all the supply air-drops for the Chindits during their arduous campaigns in the Far East.



At the Burma Star memorial, one of the two surviving members of the 14th Army present at the event was one George Ingram Durrant who had served with the Intelligence Corps in a field security unit during the Burma campaign.



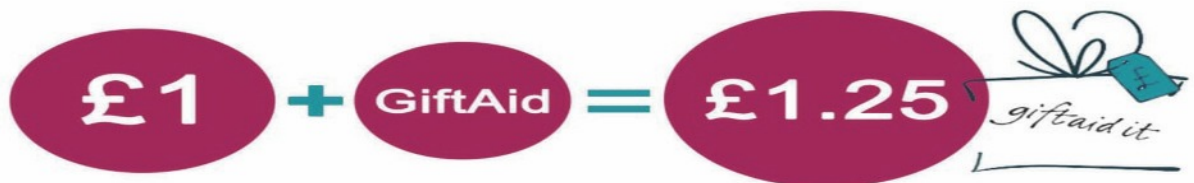
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Branch Standard on Parade...continued

On the following day, Sunday 18th August, I attended a commemoration, at Two Gates in Tamworth, for Colin Grazier GC. Colin, along with others, recovered Enigma code-books from a stricken German U-Boat



GIFT AID



Make your donations go further with Gift Aid

Gift Aid is given by the government on donations to charities at a rate of 25p in the pound, so for every £1 you donate the government will give the charity a further 25p if you are a UK tax payer. This means that a £20 donation will be worth £25.

Most importantly your annual Legion membership subscription counts as a donation. Currently we have just under 50% of our membership signed up to Gift Aid, it would be great if we could increase this percentage. This is yet another easy and painless way of contributing to the Poppy appeal. For full details of how to sign up for Gift Aid go to the link below.

[Gift Aid | Royal British Legion](#)