

SERVICE NOT SELF

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION



Registered Charity Number 219279

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2014–2015 AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE MINUTES 2015

HEAD OFFICE: 199 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1 1AA



PRESIDENT
HRH The Princess Royal



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WOMEN'S SECTION**



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**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
2014–2015**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE MINUTES
2015**



PRESIDENT

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS ANNE, THE PRINCESS ROYAL KG KT GCMG



OFFICERS AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE

President:

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL

National Life Vice-Presidents:

Mrs E E Nash OBE
Dame Mary Bridges DBE
Mrs D Ingham OBE
Mrs M A Cole OBE
Mrs D P Valler OBE
Mrs Wendy Bromwich JP

National Vice-Presidents:

Mrs S Jones CBE, DL, JP, O ST J
Mrs B Underhill OBE
Elizabeth, The Dowager Countess of Scarborough LVO
Her Grace The Duchess of Grafton GCVO (until November 2015)
The Lady Grey of Codnor
Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE
Mrs B A Frankland
Mrs J Martin DL
The Right Honourable The Countess Bathurst
Auriol, Marchioness of Linlithgow
Mrs V Kerr-Wilson (Patron)
Mrs Joanne Andrew-Steer MBE
The Viscountess Brookeborough (Patron)

Chairman:

Mrs M Humphry

Vice-Chairman:

Mrs P Chrimes

Chairman of Finance:

Miss S Fishlock

Central Committee Members:

Mrs K Brown	Mrs J Murray MBE
Mrs M Cook	Mrs S Saban
Mrs H Crosby	Mrs J Salter
Mrs M Earley (until Jan 2015)	Miss A K Scase
Miss S Fishlock	Mrs M Skells
Mrs M Harris (until Apr 2015)	Mrs S Thompson
Mrs E Harrison	Miss J Walker
Mrs F Havergal	Mrs D Warlow
Mrs A P Morris RGN (until Apr 2015)	Mrs E Williams

National Standard Bearer:

Mrs S Parke

Deputy National Standard Bearer:

Mrs R Perkins

Acting National Secretary:

Tony Wright

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Members who serve on RBL Committees:

<i>Board of Trustees</i>	National Chairman
<i>Campaign Group</i>	National Chairman
<i>Welfare Policy Panel</i>	National Vice-Chairman
<i>Legion Complaints Committee</i>	National Chairman
<i>Training Advisory Group</i>	National Vice-Chairman
<i>Finance Committee (Investments only)</i>	Acting National Secretary

SUB-COMMITTEES FOR 2015/2016

Finance:

National Chairman, National Vice-Chairman <i>and</i>	Chairman: Miss S Fishlock Mrs K Brown Mrs F Havergal Miss A K Scase Mrs M Skells
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Conference Committee:

National Chairman, National Vice-Chairman, Acting National Secretary, <i>and</i>	Chairman: Miss J Walker Mrs M Cook Mrs H Crosby Mrs J Salter Mrs A L Rowlands Mrs J Van Boyd
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President's Award Scheme:

National Chairman, <i>and</i>	Chairman: Mrs P Chrimes (<i>National Vice-Chairman</i>) Mrs W Bromwich JP (<i>Life Vice-President</i>) Mrs S Saban Mrs S Wright
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Welfare Steering Group:

National Chairman, National Vice-Chairman <i>and</i>	Chairman (Committee): Mrs M Humphry Mrs P Ayres MBE Mrs D Ingham OBE Miss G Sprackland
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National Awards Sub-Committee:

Mrs E Harrison
Mrs J Murray MBE
Miss A K Scase

Fundraising Initiatives Advisory Group:

Mrs K Brown
Mrs M Skells
Mrs S Thompson
Mrs D Warlow
Mrs E Williams



STAFF

**Acting National Secretary/
Accountant:**

Tony Wright

Welfare Adviser:

Alison Cameron-Wood

Secretariat:

*Administration and Events Manager
Secretarial Support*

Lisa Bunting
Catherine Henshaw (until May 2015)
Francesca Quine (from May 2015)

*Communications and Fundraising
Officer*

Rachael Bhebhe

Accounts Department:

*Accounts/Membership Supervisor
Accounts/Membership Clerks*

Avril Bailey
Debbie Plunkett
Janet Philips

*Accounts/Membership and
Welfare Clerk*

Katherine Boyle

Northern Ireland District Office:

*Secretary to the Northern Ireland
District Committee*

Maureen Beattie
51–55 Fountain Street
Belfast, BT1 5EB
Telephone: 0333011 4142
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Janet, Debbie and Katherine manning the goods stall



ANNUAL REPORT

The National Officers and Central Committee have great pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of The Royal British Legion Women's Section.



CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2014-2015

Back Row:

Miss S Fishlock, Mrs J Salter, Miss A K Scase, Mrs D Warlow, Mrs S Thompson, Mrs A Morris RGN, Mrs E Harrison

Middle Row:

Mrs F Havergal, Mrs J Murray MBE, Miss S Saban, Miss J Walker, Mrs M Cook, Mrs K Brown

Front Row:

Mrs H Crosby, Mrs P Chrimes (National Vice-Chairman), Mrs E Williams, Mrs M Humphry (National Chairman), Mrs M Skells



GENERAL REPORT

BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

I would like to start by thanking Central Committee for the tremendous support given to me over the past year. We welcomed to our ranks Liz Harrison, who was co-opted as a replacement for Pat Berry. Due to her continuing ill health, Pat had decided to take a year out. She has subsequently decided that she would not seek re-election this year and I would like to place on record our grateful thanks to Pat for her outstanding contribution to the Women's Section over many years.

In January we received news that a Central Committee stalwart, Margaret Earley, had taken the very hard decision to resign from the Committee due to health reasons and once again I would like to place on record our sincere thanks to Margaret for her unfailing support to Central over the past 18 years. Julia Walker very kindly suggested that she was happy to take over responsibility for the whole of the East Midlands Region, so that we could cut down on expenses, and the Central Committee gratefully accepted this offer.

This Conference will also see the end of an era for another of our stalwart members, Joan Murray, who is the first member of the Central Committee to serve the full rotation of three x three-year terms plus the extra one year permitted if a suitable replacement was not forthcoming, as the representative of the Northern Region. Joan's contribution to the Women's Section has been truly remarkable. To my knowledge, she has been a Standard Bearer, a Judge, held numerous offices at Branch and County level and served on Central Committee and many of the sub-committees. In addition to this she served as our Conference Chairman at Conference 2015 and did an absolutely first class job. Everyone on Central Committee will miss Joan's presence and her depth of knowledge of our Organisation.

I personally am absolutely delighted with magnificent amounts of money that our Branches have donated to the Benevolent Fund. Not least, because I felt vindicated and that I was in a position to have every right to say "I told you it was wrong to judge us on a nine month trading year"! Well done and a huge THANK YOU.

Once again I am indebted to our National and Life Vice-Presidents for their sound advice given to me over the past year. Their unfailing support has been second to none. Whenever it has been necessary for us to seek their views on any difficulties they have been honest and helpful in their opinions.

I would also like to express my thanks to Peter Hills, for his support since his appointment as the Women's Section Padre. With his unique charm and wit, Peter has endeared himself to us all.

Now I come to the really difficult part of my Report. How can I justly pay tribute to our magnificent, hardworking team at Head Office? Tony Wright has been a tower of strength to both me and your Vice-Chairman, Pat. His advice has always been both sound and sensible and he has on many occasions brought a word of reason when our anger was evident. Lisa Bunting (aka St. Lisa) and Avril Bailey who have been with us for many years and are loved by the whole membership and to whom no words of thanks would ever be sufficient. To Debbie Plunkett and Janet Phillips, who both work so quietly and efficiently it is easy to forget they are even there! To Alison Cameron-Wood who has brought new depths and dimensions to the way we deliver our Welfare. We thought we would never find a replacement for her predecessor but we certainly hit



the jackpot in finding Alison! To the two temporary members of the Staff, Katherine Boyle and Francesca Quine who have both brought their own unique personalities to the team. In this tribute I must not forget Rachael Bhebhe who left us recently to pursue her dream of a theatrical career, but nevertheless made a tremendous impact on the Women's Section during her time with us.

At this time I do not know what the future holds in store for the Women's Section but I am very proud to serve as Chairman of the Organisation that we all love.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Branches and Counties have also been busy as demonstrated by Central Committee reports on their Regions.

■ EASTERN

REGION 1 – NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, ESSEX – Mrs S Saban

All counties have worked well, supporting the Women's Section Schemes. Each county has organised many events from concerts, tea parties, county lunches and county days. The counties have worked alongside the RBL with the Standard Bearer training and competitions. The new County Officers have stepped in well. Suffolk and Essex have experienced illness with the officers at county level but have all worked together to get the work complete. A coach party from each county attended National Conference. A good time was had by all. Every member in these counties has Service Not Self at heart.

REGION 2 – BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, HUNTINGDONSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE, HERTFORDSHIRE – Mrs M Skells

This has been another successful year for Eastern Region 2. County and branch committees continue to organise popular events generating funds for our benevolent work, besides showcasing their presence in the community. Our counties continued with their usual competitions at conferences with entries of the highest standards.

We were well represented at National Conference in Bournemouth and many received awards for their achievements. Our Regional Standard Bearer was placed sixth in the National competition.

As in other regions we have experienced branch closures, however, one new branch was opened. The cost of meeting venues is still an issue; many now take place in members' homes.

Members are very loyal; continuing to promote and support the Women's Section and its' aims. I have no doubt that next year will be as successful.

■ EAST MIDLAND SHIRES

REGIONS 1 AND 2 – LEICESTERSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE – Miss J Walker

Sadly, early this year, Margaret Earley, through ill health, stood down from Central Committee after 17 loyal years of service to the East Midland Shires, she will be and is greatly missed.

Listening to the work being undertaken by County Committees when I attend their meetings, it is clear that everyone is working extremely hard to raise funds, to enable our Women's Section schemes to continue and flourish.



The County Officers and Committees have a working relationship with their RBL counterparts, wherever possible organising joint events and sharing costs.

The average donations per branch was £491.64 – an excellent achievement – one you should all be very proud of.

Membership and number of branches continue to give cause for concern; large clubs disaffiliating has an impact on, not just the RBL, but also our membership.

My sincere thanks to everyone in the Region for their support and warm welcome.

■ METROPOLITAN – Mrs J Salter

Members of all four counties have worked very hard raising money for the National schemes and a county received a certificate for coming third in the Overton Cup for amount of money raised per member. Successful arts and crafts competitions were held in the various counties with the standard of work being entered very high. We have been delighted that our National Vice-President Elizabeth, Countess of Scarbrough, has been able to attend some of our events. Once again we were honoured to be asked to the opening of the Garden of Remembrance at St Paul's Cathedral where all four County Chairmen laid a cross.

■ NORTHERN

REGION 1 – DURHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND, NORTH YORKSHIRE – Mrs J Murray MBE

Durham: Once again committee and branch members have worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the organisation, at the same time raising funds. Various methods have been tried this year including, two Afternoon Teas, a Tea Dance, produce stall at Lister House, Tombola at the WS Day at Yorkshire Air Museum, a county social evening, trip to the NMA and an annual Handicraft Exhibition (a profit for the first time) enabling the county to make donations to our National Schemes. Several members attended Conference 2015, where the county was awarded the Princess Royal Cup and some branches received cups or certificates. Accommodation and transport for Southport 2016 has already been organised. The County Chairman continues to update the Facebook page and we had 150 likes.

Northumberland: Because of the incapacity of the County Chairman, there had been little fundraising events organised by the county. However, the three branches have continued publicity and fundraising days within their own communities and have made donations to National Schemes; the county being placed fourth nationally in the Eileen Edgar Cup Competition, despite only having three branches. The Officers and committee consider the county is still viable. I have arranged social events for 2016 which will be notified to branches through the County Newsletter. Several branch members attended Annual Conference 2015, visited the NMA and have already booked accommodation and transport for Southport 2016.

North Yorkshire: Once again the four branches of this county have done well with publicity and fundraising, resulting in donations being made to National Schemes. The main events for the county being the annual coffee morning and the Rally at the Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington; both very successful, with various Associations being in attendance at the Rally with a very substantial public turn out – possibly the appearance of the last Victor bomber being a great attraction.



REGION 2 – EAST RIDINGS, SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE – Mrs Hazel Crosby

East Yorkshire: Obituaries: Mrs Brenda Watson County Committee, Mrs Anita Rust, Keyingham Branch Treasurer. Cottingham branch closed, remaining members not well enough to continue, but still support WS.

Hornsea branch has new members. One young member puts membership forms inside new helpers empty cake tins, before returning them after cake events, result – new members!

WS fundraising happens throughout the year, and help is given to the Poppy Appeal. The County Chairman and committee work hard, attending WS events and meetings whenever possible.

South and West Yorkshire: Members and the County Standard Bearer, Mrs Jackie Morris, attended various events, including Elvington Air Museum and Nostell Priory.

WS fundraising is ongoing with coffee mornings etc, and they help with the Poppy Appeal. Last year, my branch held Taste of Xmas at the Chairman's home to thank supporters, a huge success; it wasn't intended as a fundraiser, but over £100 was made so we intend to have another one.

Women's Section members are brilliant!

■ NORTH WESTERN

REGION 1 – WESTMORLAND, CUMBERLAND, NORTH AND EAST LANCASHIRE, ISLE OF MAN – Mrs E Harrison

All our Counties have had a busy year. The minutes I receive from Counties show the hard work they and their branches are doing to raise funds for the work of the Women's Section during the year.

I have visited North East Lancashire during the time of possible amalgamation with the rest of the Lancashire Counties. The outcome was that North East Lancashire would stay a separate county. I was Invited to Cumberland County Conference and made to feel very welcome. My own county, Westmorland, was sad to lose Shap Branch after nearly 90 years, but we hope to keep some of them as members of other branches in our county.

Most of the counties have representation at National Conference and hopefully in 2016 more will be able to attend as Conference in Southport.

This has been my first full year on Central Committee and I have learned more about the work the Women's Section carries out on behalf of the people who need it and look forward to meeting more of the counties in my area who never forget our motto of "Service not Self".

■ FIVE COUNTIES OF THE SOUTH WEST

REGION 1 – CORNWALL, DEVON – Mrs F Havergal

Cornwall: Cornwall has had an up and down year. They have to close the Isles of Scilly branch. With permission of the Town Council, Newquay had a treasure hunt around the town collecting a considerable sum en-route.

Devon: Devon has had an austerity drive, not accepting invitations to other county conferences nor did they ask any guests to theirs. Their fundraising continues.



REGION 2 – DORSET, SOMERSET AND WILTSHIRE – Mrs F Havergal

Dorset: They are discussing disbanding groups; however, they have a number of lively branches so the county is pretty active.

Somerset: Somerset has had a tough time but is getting through it, the new officers are working really hard, and they are now looking forward ably led by their President.

Wiltshire: Wiltshire was thrilled when Amanda Bearryman came third in the National Standard Bearers Competition in Bournemouth. The county conference was well attended at Tidworth. Fundraising has continued apace in all branches.

■ WEST MIDLANDS

REGION 1 – GLOUCESTERSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE –

Miss A K Scase

Although Branches continue to close throughout the three counties, albeit at a slower rate this year, those remaining are still raising funds for Women's Section Benevolent work and having some fun along the way.

Gloucestershire: One branch opted for Small Branch status, Administrative Branch, I believe, is the official title. They were amongst our better fundraisers and, now, with less administration to complete, are continuing to fundraise with more energy. This branch celebrated 70 years last year.

Herefordshire: Continued to move along with its remaining two branches, after losing Ledbury to a Club closure. Their President, Mrs Denaro, once again hosted a County lunch in her extensive garden in July, again ordering the weather up on her very own hot-line to the Almighty (at least that's the rumour)

Worcestershire: Have now settled down to the business we are about.

A closed Branch has reopened, Tenbury Wells, to add to the county's excellent fundraising team, although there have been two closures, due to age, infirmity and lack of Officers.

REGION 2 – SHROPSHIRE, NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE, BIRMINGHAM, WARWICKSHIRE – Miss K Scase

Mrs Ann Morris, who has been the regional representative since April 2006, has now stepped down and we are seeking a nominee to take over her role. Many thanks go to Mrs Morris for all her years of dedicated service to the counties.

The counties of Region 2 continue to raise funds for Women's Section Benevolent work, even though they struggle to complete Officers and Committees to run their counties.

North Staffordshire are contemplating rolling their Rally and County Conference into one event due to falling attendances at both.

Birmingham have their perennial problem of Committee members not being able to travel across Birmingham to attend meetings or events.

Warwickshire are still working with a temporary Secretary, but do have a new Chairman.



■ SOUTH EASTERN

REGION 1 AND 2 – BERKSHIRE, KENT, SURREY, HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, SUSSEX – **Mrs M Cook and Miss S Fishlock**

Along with all counties and branches, the South East has been extra busy this year with assistance at the VE and VJ Services and Parades. Combined with these, our fundraising for the Women's Section continued, by holding the regular County Lunches, Cream Teas, Skittle Tournament, Handicraft Days, Rallies and new exciting items such as Bungee jumping.

The good news is that one of the four new formations of a new branch is in Berkshire County – best wishes to Pangbourne.

Sandra and I have enjoyed our various visits and thank everybody for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Best Wishes to all and we hope to see you at Southport.

Keep up the good work and most important “enjoy yourselves at the same time”.

■ NORTHERN IRELAND – Mrs S Thompson

We began our new year with the inaugural meeting of ladies who wished to open a new branch in Newtownards. This was very successful with the result that they officially opened a few months later and new members are still joining. Another new branch was opened at Lurgan. So far they have approximately thirteen members and are still recruiting. The Secretary of Augher/Clogher WS, Hilary Lloyd, sadly passed away and we were notified that it was their intention to close. We are delighted to say that they have since agreed to remain open and they are going from strength to strength. Sydenham branch were struggling; yet again I am delighted to report they also will remain active. We have unfortunately lost two branches, Whiteabbey and Downpatrick, apart from that we continue to strive for the benefit of our wonderful organisation.

We hosted our Annual District Conference in February and were delighted that Tony Wright agreed to attend and address conference. We look forward to welcoming Pat Chrimes at our 2016 conference.

Thirteen of us travelled to attend National Conference in Bournemouth but the icing on the cake was when our Northern Ireland Standard Bearer, Susan Parke won the National Competition. We are so proud of her at both local and national level.

On 26 June we dedicated our new Northern Ireland Standard at Derryloran Parish Church, Cookstown. There was a fantastic turnout of members and Standard Bearers both Women's Section and Royal British Legion. Afterwards, the Women's Section Cookstown Branch provided us with a lovely lunch.

We received twenty invitations to attend the Royal Garden Party at Hillsborough Castle. These tickets are allocated within the branches on a rota system, by doing this it means every branch gets to attend. Two of our members were introduced to Prince Edward, and of course they took the opportunity to publicise the work of the Women's Section.



■ WALES DISTRICT NORTH AND SOUTH

Mrs Eileen Williams and Mrs Doreen Warlow are the Central Committee representatives for North and South Wales. They have attended meetings over the year as well as Annual Conference. Sadly Monmouthshire County have had to close but we are pleased to announce that the branches within Monmouthshire have joined the District. Flintshire still remain a County, however, all other branches are now part of the District of Wales.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME

The Women's Section visits programme has, as usual, been very busy. The tables below, and over page, indicates where the National Officers, Live Vice-Presidents and some senior staff have represented the membership at Women's Section events and also with outside organisations.

REPRESENTATION AND VISITS ACTIVITY REPORT

The County Conference Season started in October 2014, and the National Officers, Life Vice-Presidents, Acting National Secretary and Head Office Staff wish to express their sincere thanks for invitations to address the membership at local level.

DATE	EVENT AND VENUE	REPRESENTATIVES
2014		
12 October	Cavell Nurses' Trust Wreath Laying and Reception, St Martin-in-the-Fields WC2	Janet Salter
18 October	Lunch with Mrs Kerr-Wilson (Flintshire County President)	National Vice-Chairman
23 October	Poppies to the Palaces	National Vice-Chairman and Laura Hayworth (nee Ashton)
25 October	Essex County Conference	Acting National Secretary
31 October	RBL Central Grants Team Away Day	National Welfare Adviser
1 November	Berkshire RBL Concert and Festival of Remembrance, Winnersh	National Vice-Chairman
1 November	Kent County Conference	National Chairman
3 November	Garden of Remembrance Service – St Paul's Cathedral	National Chairman, National Vice-Chairman, Acting National Secretary, National Standard Bearer
6 November	The Poppy Factory – Field of Remembrance	National Chairman, National Vice-Chairman, Acting National Secretary
6 November	Commonwealth Council Meeting & Field of Remembrance	National Chairman and Acting National Secretary
8 November	War Widows Association of GB Service of Remembrance	National Chairman
10 November	Flanders Remembers Concert, Guards Chapel, London	Janet Salter, Beverley Old, Sandra Saban and Margaret Neilson
11 November	Armistice Day Service of Remembrance	The Lady Grey of Codnor, Acting National Secretary and Julia Walker
15 November	Lincolnshire County Conference	National Vice-Chairman
22 November	SE Met County Conference	National Chairman and Lisa Bunting
25 November	Institute of Welfare, Empress State Building, London	National Welfare Adviser
29 November	Berkshire County Conference	National Vice-Chairman
29 November	SW Met County Conference	Acting National Secretary
29 November	Dorset County Conference	National Chairman



DATE	EVENT AND VENUE	REPRESENTATIVES
2015		
17 January	District of Wales RBL Annual Conference	National Vice-Chairman
24 January	NE Met County Conference	National Chairman
7 February	Northern Ireland District County Conference	Acting National Secretary
24 February	Institute of Welfare, Birmingham	National Welfare Adviser
5 March	AFF Meeting – Caroline Mayne (Employment, Training, Allowance and Money Specialist)	National Welfare Adviser
23 March	Measurement Workshop	National Welfare Adviser
1 April	Cavell Nurses' Award Ceremony	National Vice-Chairman
9 April	RBL Contact Centre, Cardiff	National Welfare Adviser
26 April	Anzac Parade and Service	National Chairman
15 May	Women's Royal Navy Service Benevolent Trust	Mrs D P Valler OBE
10 June	Army Servicewomen Network Conference, Tidworth	National Welfare Adviser and Debbie Plunkett
18 June	AFF Army Families Research Symposium	National Welfare Adviser
20 June	Scotland Annual Conference	National Vice-Chairman
21 June	Weymouth Armed Forces Day	National Chairman
24 June	Princess Royal's Charities Forum, Buckingham Palace	National Chairman and Acting National Secretary
7 July	Flanders Day Reception	Acting National Secretary
9 July	Solemn Drumhead Service, Royal Hospital Chelsea	National Vice-Chairman
1–2 August	By-gone Days Event	Wendy Bromwich JP, Live Vice-President
13 September	Last Big Parade, 144 Air Cadet HQ Richmond	National Chairman and National Standard Bearer
19 September	Westmoreland County Conference	National Chairman
27 September	East Knoyle, Semley and Sedgehill 70th Anniversary	National Chairman
27 September	Annual Air Bridge Commemoration Service	Julia Walker

OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Wrens Benevolent Trust

Mrs D P Valler OBE, Life Vice-President attended the Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust Annual General meeting in Portsmouth on 15 May 2015.

Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League

Our representative for this organisation is the National Chairman of the day, who has been invited to attend two meetings this year, on 6 November 2014 and 21 May 2015, at the Canadian High Commission, also attended by the Acting National Secretary. These meetings enable the Chairman to meet and liaise with delegates from the Commonwealth counties.

National Council of Women

Mrs D P Valler OBE, Life Vice-President continues to represent the Royal British Legion Women's Section on the National Council of Women and attended their Annual Conference 10–12 October 2014 in York.



MEMBERSHIP

REPORT FROM THE ACTING NATIONAL SECRETARY

As at 1 October 2015 we had 29,513 members, reflecting a net reduction of 2,813 in the year.

This is very much in line with the steady decrease in numbers that we have seen in recent years.

Within these figures, we actually gained 3,095 new members during the year, so lost 5,908.

Our members are our lifeblood, fundraising for our organisation as they do, whilst demonstrating our motto of "Service not Self".

Unfortunately increasing costs and declining membership numbers has meant that the membership fee had to rise to £8 for the year 2015/16 but this still represents excellent value when compared to other organisations.

It is, of course, ever more difficult for fewer members to raise the same amount for our Benevolent Fund but in 2014/15 they still managed to raise over half-a-million pounds. I would like to thank you all for the wonderful job that you continue to do.



Norfolk County's 2p Mile Challenge



STANDARD BEARERS

REPORT BY THE NATIONAL AND DEPUTY PARADE MARSHAL

This year the National Conference was held in Bournemouth after many years away from the B.I.C and it was nice to be back.

The National Standard Bearers Competition was won by Mrs Susan Parke from Northern Ireland and the Deputy Standard Bearer is now Mrs Rachel Perkins, many congratulations to them both.

Thanks go to all those who undertook judging and marshaling duties, a special presentation was made, by Mrs Sheila Webster, to Mrs Maureen Witherspoon who retired from judging and marshaling duties after many years service and we thank her and wish her well.

This year has also seen, Mrs Helen Richardson and Mrs Mo Campbell step down from duties for the RBLWS, but we welcomed Miss Debbie Lofts into the fold.

The parade in Bournemouth was wonderful and thanks go to all Standard Bearers who took part and produced a magnificent display for the parade, wreath laying and, for the first time, a Sunset Beating Retreat Ceremony.

The National Standard Bearer represented the RBLWS at the National Veterans parade and service in London, the commemorations for Edith Cavell and the Festival of Remembrance; our thanks go to her for her dedication.



Standard Bearers' Parade



Many County and Branch Standard Bearers have attended services and parades throughout the year and we thank them for their dedication and support. Our Standard Bearers are a credit to the organisation and we are proud of them.

Some slight problems occurred with the County Standard Bearer competitions but all was well in the end and we thank all the judges and marshals who once again stepped up, these problems will be looked at in detail in 2016 and hopefully there will no further difficulties.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

We said farewell to Mrs Margaret Earley, Mrs Margaret Harris, Mrs Ann Morris RGN and Mrs Pat Berry.

On behalf of the membership, great appreciation is extended to those who serve or have served on this, our National Committee.

WELFARE

The Women's Section Allowance (WSA) is a quarterly payment of £325 (£25 per week) which is made to ex-service personnel or widows of ex-service personnel, to help them with their day to day living expenses.

The table below shows the following:

- Number of beneficiaries of the WSA and children's allowance as at 30 September 2015
- Number of annual reviews completed
- Number of new allowances awarded during the year
- Number of allowances withdrawn

Women's Section Allowance

Period	No. of beneficiaries	No. of completed annual reviews	No. of new allowances awarded	No. of allowances withdrawn
2014/2015	176	159	24	34

Women's Section – Children's Allowance

Period	No. of beneficiaries	No. of completed annual reviews	No. of new allowances awarded	No. of allowances withdrawn
2014/2015	12	9	N/A	1



TV Licences

One of the benefits of the WSA is that those beneficiaries under 75 years can apply to the Women's Section for their TV licences to be paid for on their behalf.

The table below shows the total number of TV licences renewed during the last financial year:

Period	Number	Cost
2014/2015	38	£5,375.90

Children's Fund

Through the Children's Fund, we are able to help serving and ex-service families with the following:

- Children's bedroom furniture
- Carpeting (for child's room)
- Child care costs
- Essential clothing (winter, summer, school uniform and clothing for clubs)
- School equipment
- School trips
- Specialist medical equipment

During the last financial year, we received 407 requests for assistance against the Children's Fund, of those request, 285 had grants awarded and 122 requests were declined.

Period	Requests received	Grants awarded		Grants declined	
	Number	Number	Value	Number	Value
2014/2015	407	285	£58,868.08	122	£92,056.83

The table below shows the breakdown of the 285 grants awarded, by category:

Category	Number of grants awarded	Value of grants
Baby Items	10	£1,753.94
Carpeting (child's bedroom)	25	£4,435.68
Child Care Costs	4	£1,292.00
Child's Furniture	155	£35,144.09
Clubs	3	£75.00
Essential Clothing	79	£14,072.41
School Equipment	2	£252.96
School Trips	4	£1,092.00
Family Holiday*	1	£0.00
Specialist Equipment	2	£750.00
Welfare Break Holiday	1	£0.00*
Total	285	£58,868.08

*No cost is showing against the holiday as these are now organised through the RBL Central Grants Team

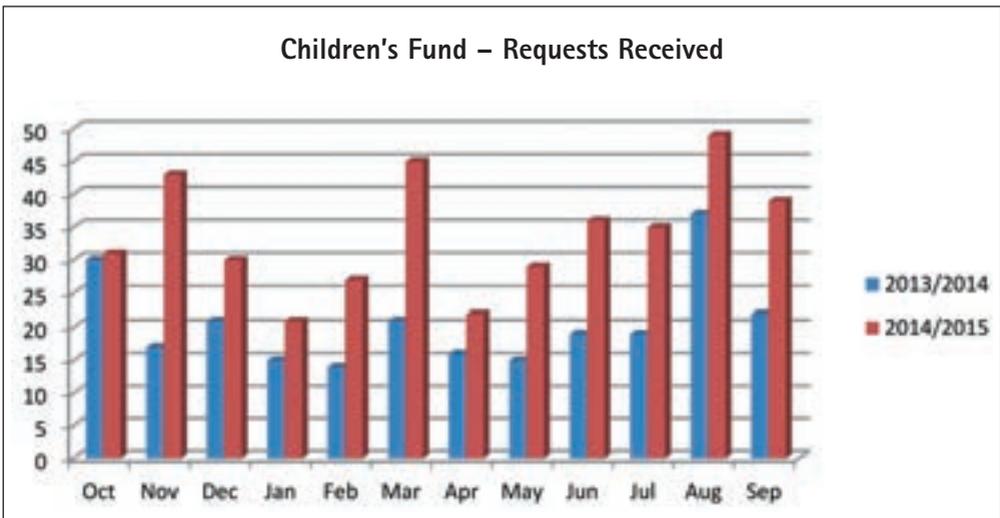


How are we doing compared to last year?

During the last financial year, we received an additional 161 requests, which is an increase of 60%. The table and chart below, show the number of requests received on a month by month basis for the last two years:

Children's Fund – Requests Received

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
2013/14	30	17	21	15	14	21	16	15	19	19	37	22	246
2014/15	31	43	30	21	27	45	22	29	36	35	49	39	407



During 2013/14, 83% of the applications received resulted in a grant being awarded. For 2014/15 the percentage of grants being awarded versus applications received was 70%.

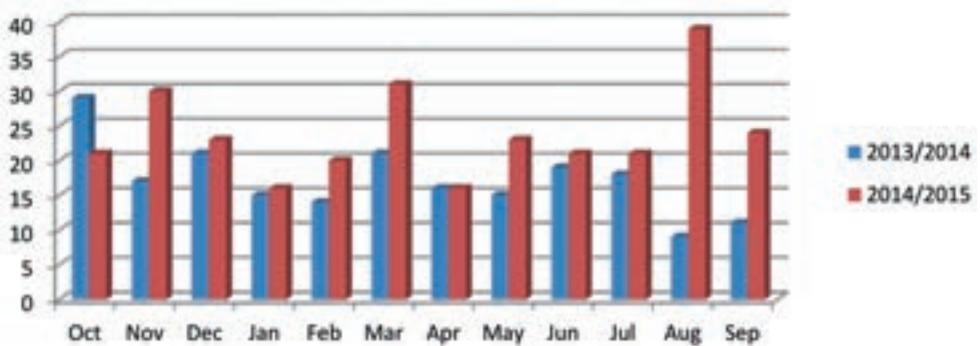
The table below and chart shown overleaf show the number of grants awarded on a month by month basis for the last two years:

Children's Fund – Grants Awarded

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
2013/14	29	17	21	15	14	21	16	15	19	18	9	11	205
2014/15	21	30	23	16	20	31	16	23	21	21	39	24	285



Children's Fund – Grants Awarded



President's Award Scheme

The President's Award Scheme is something which the Women's Section should feel extremely proud of, as very few military charities provide financial support with regards to education.

The scheme is open to serving and ex-service personnel, as well as their dependants (including spouses/partners).

There are currently two strands to the scheme:

- Scholarships
 - Up to a maximum of £1,500 per year (max three years)
 - Accommodation fees/course fees
 - First degrees
 - Dependants aged between 18–21 (for initial application)
- Grants
 - Up to a maximum of £500 (one grant, repeat applications are not accepted)
 - Course fees, computer equipment, text books and public transport costs
 - Any academic course up to and including degree level
 - Applicants of any age with a direct service connection

The tables opposite show the following:

- Number of applications received for each scheme
- Number awarded
- Number declined
- Value of awards



President's Award Scheme – Grants

Period	No. of applications	Awarded	Declined	Value of grants
2014/2015	38	21	17	£8,089.13

President's Award Scheme – Scholarships/School Fees

Period	No. of applications	Awarded	Declined	Value of grants
2014/2015	27	24	3	£33,850.00

Why we still need your support

Based on the fact that the number of requests for assistance has increased by 60% during the last financial year, this clearly shows that the serving/ex service personnel still require our help.

Elements from Welfare Reform, which may lead to an increase in requests for assistance:

- Potential changes to the Child's Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit's
- Benefit Caps
 - £500 per week for a family
 - £350 per week for a single person
- Universal Credit, which replaces Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit
 - The Universal Credit will be paid direct to one member of the household, this has led to some private landlords refusing to provide tenancies to those in receipt of Housing Benefit for fear of rent arrears i.e. the money being received not being passed onto them
- Bedroom Tax
 - 660,000 households affected, Councils had additional funds to cover Discretionary Housing Payments to cover shortfalls, but this is due to cease this year

We also have the remainder of the British Army in Germany being relocated to the UK by the end of 2018, so we do not know at this time if this will generate more requests for assistance.

The Women's Section is totally reliant on its members, firstly for their membership fees and secondly for the fantastic fund raising which you do on the sections behalf.

But don't just take our word for it, we received over a 100 thank you cards, notes, emails from individuals, families and caseworkers we have helped during the last year and here are just a few examples of the difference your fund raising efforts have made to some of our beneficiaries lives:

Presidents' Award Scheme

"I want to once again send my sincere thanks for your support during my time at medical school and let you know how I am faring.

I have completed some mass spectrometry research and just commenced a job in the emergency department as a junior doctor in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. The team are wonderful and I feel I am applying my skills well.

Warm regards"

Dr Anna Dorner



Children's Fund

"Thank you from the recent help you provided us with for baby equipment. The girls are already enjoying the safety and comfort of adventures in their lovely pram.

Your kindness and generosity are very much appreciated and will not be forgotten

Best wishes"

Adam and Kathryn Gillie and Scarlett and Amber!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere thanks are expressed to the National Officers, Members and the Board of Trustees and Staff of the Royal British Legion.

To our own members, deep gratitude is offered for their dedication, support and fundraising. We look forward to the many challenges that lie ahead, and will work diligently to ensure the future of the Women's Section.

IN MEMORY

ESPECIALLY REMEMBERED THIS YEAR ARE:

- Gay Jackson, Head Office employee from September 1997 to May 2008.
- Kay Grynnyer, Dorset County.
- General Sir Edward Burgess KCB, OBE, National President of the RBL from 1987–1993.
- Mrs Betty Dawkins, North East Metropolitan County and past Central Committee Member.
- All servicemen and women serving in areas of conflict.
- Many other members of the Women's Section.

AWARDS

GOLDEN AWARDS were presented to the following Members:

NAME	BRANCH	COUNTY
Gwendoline Ruth Bratton	Market Drayton	Shropshire
Mrs Margaret Leahy	Lambourn	Berkshire
Angela Swift	Bakewell	Derbyshire
Alyson Wilson	Healing and District	Lincolnshire
Brenda Beebe	Warboy's	Huntingdonshire
Jean Tildesley	Warboy's	Huntingdonshire
Gillian Ward	Ramsey	Huntingdonshire
Olive Young	Littleover	Derbyshire
Dawn Rides	Kingswinford	South Staffordshire



BRANCH NUMBERS

Eastern Region	137	Northern Ireland District	36
East Midland Shires	56	Republic of Ireland	3
Metropolitan Region	29	Overseas	2
Northern Region	38	Holding Branches	46
North Western Region	57	Pall Mall	1
South Eastern Region	122	Military Wives and Girlfriends	1
Five Counties of the South West	95	Recruit for Spouses	1
Wales Region	45		
West Midlands Region	74	TOTAL	743

THE RBL - A YEAR IN REVIEW

For more information or to get involved visit

www.britishlegion.org.uk

or call

0808 802 8080

LIVE ON

TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN
AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING





FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**For the year ended
30 September 2015**



STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- * select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- * make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- * state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- * prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in being.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION

The books and records of the Royal British Legion Women's Section will be audited as part of the overall audit of The Royal British Legion. The auditor will report on the consolidated financial statements of The Royal British Legion which will include the results and assets and liabilities of the Women's Section.

These statements comprise the General and Benevolent Funds and are intended for internal circulation only. The statements have not been prepared in the style of the 'Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting by Charities'.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 30 September 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
INCOME		
Membership Fees.....	187,115	200,554
Fundraising	501,196	358,372
Purse	—	64,188
Donations.....	13,400	12,241
Legacies	12,310	4,000
Welfare Almonisation	4,914	6,011
Grand Draw	7,431	—
Interest Received	27,337	29,878
Dividend Income	51,859	53,902
Profit/(Loss) on Sale of Goods.....	14,512	5,131
	£820,074	£734,277
EXPENDITURE		
Benevolent	569,983	620,948
National and District	274,384	328,894
Affiliation Fees (amount allocated to District/Countries) ...	16,928	23,243
	£861,295	£973,085
Deficit for the year	(41,221)	(238,808)
Gain/(Loss) on Investments.....	(75,367)	128,357
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year transferred to (from)		
Accumulated Funds	(£116,588)	(£110,451)
Analysed as follows:		
General.....	(43,081)	(32,780)
Benevolent.....	(73,507)	(77,671)
	(£116,588)	(£110,451)

NOTE: All recognised gains and losses are included in the income and expenditure account.



BALANCE SHEET AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

	Notes	2015 £	2014 £
Investments	6	4,623,373	4,626,089
CURRENT ASSETS			
Sundry Debtors and Payments in Advance		102,386	85,134
Bank and Cash Balances		177,328	344,857
		279,714	429,991
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Sundry Creditors.....		293,215	329,620
Net Current Assets.....		(13,501)	100,371
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities.....		£4,609,872	£4,726,460
Financed by:			
Accumulated Funds			
General.....		1,542,966	1,586,047
Benevolent.....		3,066,906	3,140,413
		£4,609,872	£4,726,460

Approved by the Central Committee on the 27 January 2016.



CASH FLOW STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 September 2015

	Notes	2015		2014	
		£	£	£	£
Net Cash Outflow from Operating Activities	9		(174,074)		(136,635)
Returns on Investments					
Interest Received.....		79,196		83,780	
Net Cash Inflow from Returns on Investments and Servicing of Finance			79,196		83,780
INVESTING ACTIVITIES					
Purchase of Investments.....		(75,977)		(53,731)	
Sale of Investments		–		350,000	
Investment Management Fees....		3,326		12,405	
Net Cash Inflow from Investing Activities			(72,651)		308,674
Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents.....	10/11		(£167,529)		£255,819



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 September 2015

1. CHARITABLE STATUS

The Royal British Legion Women's Section is a Charity registered under the Charities Act 1960 No. 219279. As a Charity the surplus for the year of the Women's Section is exempt from taxation.

The Board of Trustees of The Royal British Legion, which includes the National Chairman of The Royal British Legion Women's Section, are the trustees of the Charity.

Responsibility for the preparation of, and the reporting on, the Financial Statements of The Royal British Legion Women's Section is delegated to the Central Committee of The Royal British Legion Women's Section.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- (a) Basis of accounting
The financial statements are prepared on the historical cost basis of accounting.
- (b) Fixed Assets
Fixed Assets are shown at cost less depreciation; depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis at rates established by reference to the expected life of the assets concerned. These rates are:
 - (i) Freehold buildings – 2%
 - (ii) Leaseholds are amortised over the remaining terms of each lease
 - (iii) Furniture and fittings – 20%
 - (iv) Computer equipment – 50%
 - (v) Freehold land is not depreciated.
- (c) Repairs and decorations
Costs of all repairs and decorations are provided for when incurred.
- (d) Investments are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Income is recognised on an accruals basis.

3. NATIONAL TROPHIES

No amount is included in the balance sheet for the cups and trophies, presented and belonging to The Royal British Legion Women's Section.

4. RESERVES

The Trustees monitor the level of reserves to ensure that it remains appropriate to the anticipated financial activity.

5. AFFILIATION FEES

The gross amount received for affiliation fees is shown in income and the amount allocated to District/Counties reflected separately with the National and District expenditure.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 30 September 2015

6. INVESTMENTS

	2015	<i>2014</i>
	£	£
RBL Portfolio and Fixed Term Deposits.....	4,623,373	4,626,089
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7. POPPY APPEAL*

In addition to the income recorded in these financial statements, Branches contributed £84,071 (2014 – £83,043) towards the Special Efforts for the Poppy Appeal, and members participated in the collections during the Closed Period.

8. BENEVOLENCE AT COUNTY AND BRANCH LEVEL*

The Women's Section made no donations to local Benevolent causes at County and Branch level.

9. RECONCILIATION OF OPERATING SURPLUS TO NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2015	<i>2014</i>
	£	£
Surplus/(Deficit) per Funds Accounts.....	(41,221)	(238,808)
Decrease/(Increase) in Debtors	(17,252)	(18,895)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	(36,405)	204,848
Interest Income.....	(79,196)	(83,780)
	<u>(£174,074)</u>	<u><i>(£136,635)</i></u>

10. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS DURING THE YEAR

	2015	<i>2014</i>
	£	£
Balance at 1 October.....	344,857	89,038
Net cash Inflow/(Outflow).....	(167,529)	255,819
	<u>£177,328</u>	<u><i>£344,857</i></u>

*NOTE: Figures in notes 7 and 8 have been extracted from County and Branch Receipts and Payments Accounts received for the period 30 June 2015.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS *(Continued)* For the year ended 30 September 2015

11. ANALYSIS OF THE BALANCE OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AS SHOWN IN THE BALANCE SHEET

	2015	2014	Change
	£	£	£
Bank and Cash Balances	£177,328	£344,857	(£167,529)

12. GRAND DRAW AND SALES INCOME

	2015	2014
	£	£
Grand Draw:		
Income	7,431	–
Expenditure	(2,160)	–
	£5,271	£0
Sale of Goods:		
Income	20,216	11,580
Expenditure	(5,704)	(6,449)
	£14,512	£5,131



BENEVOLENT FUND: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 30 September 2015

	2015 £	2014 £
INCOME		
Fundraising.....	456,047	325,313
Purse.....	–	64,188
Donations.....	13,400	12,241
Legacies.....	12,310	4,000
Welfare Almonisation.....	4,914	6,011
Grand Draw.....	7,431	–
Interest Received.....	16,949	18,524
Dividend Income.....	32,153	33,419
	£543,204	£463,696
EXPENDITURE		
Grand Draw Expenses.....	2,160	–
Fundraising Materials.....	–	1,335
Welfare Almonisation.....	5,330	4,489
Benevolence.....	562,493	615,124
	£569,983	£620,948
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year.....	(£26,779)	(£157,252)
Gain/(Loss) on Investments.....	(46,728)	79,581
(Loss)/Surplus for the year transferred to Accumulated Funds.....	(£73,507)	(£77,671)



BALANCE SHEET AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
Investments.....	2,866,491	2,868,175
CURRENT ASSETS		
Sundry Debtors and Payments in Advance.....	60,950	63,568
Bank and Cash Balances.....	286,634	396,035
	<u>£347,584</u>	<u>£459,603</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Sundry Creditors	<u>147,169</u>	<u>187,365</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>200,415</u>	<u>272,238</u>
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	<u>£3,066,906</u>	<u>£3,140,413</u>
Financed by:		
Accumulated Fund at 1 October 2014.....	3,140,413	3,218,084
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(73,507)	(77,671)
	<u>£3,066,906</u>	<u>£3,140,413</u>



GENERAL FUND: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 30 September 2015

	2015 £	2014 £
INCOME		
Membership Fees	187,115	200,554
Fundraising	45,149	33,059
Interest Received	10,388	11,354
Dividend Income	19,706	20,483
Profit/(Loss) on Sale of Goods	14,512	5,131
	276,870	270,581
EXPENDITURE (page 35)		
	291,312	352,137
Deficit for the year	(14,442)	(81,556)
Gain/(Loss) on Investments	(28,639)	48,776
Net movement in funds transferred to Accumulated Funds	(£43,081)	(£32,780)

BALANCE SHEET AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

	2015 £	2014 £
Investments	1,756,882	1,757,914
CURRENT ASSETS		
Sundry Debtors and Payments in Advance	41,436	21,566
Bank and Cash Balances	(109,306)	(51,178)
	(67,870)	(29,612)
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Sundry Creditors	146,046	142,255
Net Current Assets	(213,916)	(171,867)
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	£1,542,966	£1,586,047
Financed by:		
Accumulated Fund at 1 October 2014	1,586,047	1,618,827
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(43,081)	(32,780)
	£1,542,966	£1,586,047



GENERAL FUND: EXPENDITURE For the year ended 30 September 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
NATIONAL		
Salaries, National Insurance and Pension Fund	100,178	120,552
Temporary Staff	24,022	20,391
Common Services	38,843	49,478
Telephone, Postage, Printing and Stationery	10,471	15,200
Circular Letters to Branches	13,120	14,089
Travel and Subsistence	20,591	29,270
Wales	1,866	715
General Expenses	1,603	1,306
Seminars	4,868	3,919
Conference	49,764	54,507
Standard Bearers Expenses	3,034	6,989
Website	398	332
Advertising	180	2,903
Publicity	2,010	635
Archiving	1,847	1,909
N.M.A. Maintenance	–	500
Bank Charges	–	21
Computer	25	222
Audit Fees	–	994
Professional Fees	1,564	4,962
	£274,384	£328,894
DISTRICT/COUNTIES		
Membership Fees allocated to District/Counties	16,928	23,243
EXPENDITURE (page 34)	£291,312	£352,137

INVESTMENTS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

FUND MANAGERS	
RBL Portfolio	4,415,711
Barclays Private Bank	207,662
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	£4,623,373



SUMMARY Fees and Donations

REGION	Membership Fees £.p	Life Member £.p	Total Fees £.p	No. of Members	Benevolent Fund £.p	General Fund £.p	Total Donations £.p	No. Branches	Branch Average £.p
Eastern Region	28,948.80		28,948.80	4,540	75,341.99	9,581.24	84,923.23	137	619.88
East Midland Shires	17,995.80		17,995.80	2,826	61,020.50	3,320.00	64,340.50	56	1,148.94
Metropolitan Region	7,212.20		7,212.20	1,133	16,876.54	1,440.00	18,316.54	29	631.60
Northern Region	10,329.30		10,329.30	1,601	12,769.83	2,785.00	15,554.83	38	409.34
North Western Region	11,606.30		11,606.30	2,139	25,293.01	3,108.70	28,401.71	57	498.28
South Eastern Region	29,501.70	60.00	29,561.70	4,726	69,055.46	7,384.10	76,439.56	122	626.55
Five Counties of the South West	30,590.00		30,590.00	4,849	47,487.10	8,591.90	56,079.00	95	590.31
Wales Region	8,201.70		8,201.70	1,301	4,483.50	2,345.00	6,828.50	45	151.74
West Midland Region	25,433.90	30.00	25,463.90	3,991	27,858.25	2,102.30	29,960.55	74	404.87
Northern Ireland	6,147.30	30.00	6,177.30	1,014	28,568.25	3,637.90	32,206.15	36	894.62
Republic of Ireland	204.30		204.30	33	220.00	220.00	440.00	3	146.67
Overseas	627.40		627.40	100	0.00	42.96	42.96	2	21.48
County Branches	6,008.80		6,008.80	885	127.20	20.00	147.20	48	3.07
Pall Mall Branch	2,358.70		2,358.70	375	2,107.96		2,107.96	1	2,107.96
Total	185,166.20	120.00	185,286.20	371,209.59	44,579.10	415,788.69	743	559.61	
Special Donations					15,381.24		15,381.24		
Legacies					15,010.19		15,010.19		
Widows' Christmas Fund					5,191.04		5,191.04		
HQ Fundraising Welfare					4,914.00		4,914.00		
Total	185,166.20	120.00	185,286.20	29,513	411,706.06	44,579.10	456,285.16	743	559.61



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION

(Incorporated by Royal Charter)

President: HRH The Princess Royal KG, KT, GCVO

Charity Registration Number 219279

MINUTES AND REPORT



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

held at

BOURNEMOUTH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

on

WEDNESDAY, 15 APRIL 2015

and

THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2015

**THIS IS THE ONLY COPY TO BE SENT TO YOU
KEEP FOR YOUR DELEGATE NEXT YEAR**



PRESENT

Mrs Marilyn Humphry – National Chairman

Mrs Pat Chrimes – National Vice-Chairman

NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Dowager Countess of Scarbrough

Mrs S Jones CBE, DL, JP

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Mrs K Brown

Mrs M Cook

Mrs H Crosby

Miss S Fishlock

Mrs M Harris

Mrs E Harrison

Mrs F Havergal

Mrs A Morris RGN

Mrs J Murray MBE

Mrs S Saban

Mrs J Salter

Miss A K Scase

Mrs M Skells

Mrs S Thompson

Miss J Walker

Mrs D Warlow

Mrs E Williams

There were 29 County Delegates, 161 Branch Delegates, six Branch Standard Bearers acting as Delegates, 59 Standard Bearers and approximately 400 visitors present this year.





FIRST DAY OF CONFERENCE – WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2015

Conference opened at 10.00 am with the entry of The National Chairman and The Mayor of Bournemouth, Councillor Christopher Mayne, Baron Fellowes of West Stafford, Brian Cumming MBE Chelsea Pensioner, the Union Flag, the National Standard, The RBL National Standard, Regional, County and Branch Standard Bearers.

The Exhortation was given by the National Chairman and the Silent Tribute was observed, during which members were asked to remember Doug Cole, husband of Mrs M A Cole OBE, National Life Vice-President, Mrs Margaret Whittaker, a Conference helper for many years, all those members of the Women's Section and the Royal British Legion lost since the last Conference and members of Her Majesty's Armed Forces serving in areas of conflict around the world.

The Reverend Peter Hills conducted the Opening Service and read the Women's Section Collect. The Vote of Thanks was given by The National Chairman.

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to the Worshipful the Mayor of Bournemouth and invited the Mayor to address Conference.

2. ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO CONFERENCE BY THE MAYOR OF BOURNEMOUTH, COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER MAYNE

The Mayor introduced himself to Conference and talked about the many sites and places to visit in Bournemouth. He talked about the VE Day Anniversary on 8 May and Bournemouth's plans for it. He also mentioned the First World War 100th Anniversary commemorations in 2014. He wished the Women's Section the best for the Conference and said he hoped the Women's Section would return to Bournemouth again in the future.

3. VOTE OF THANKS AND CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked the Mayor for his warm welcome:

'Mr Mayor, thank you for your kind words and for the welcome you have given today to the Royal British Legion Women's Section's Annual Conference 2015 here in the picturesque County of Dorset and, in particular, to the beautiful seaside town of Bournemouth. I am particularly delighted to welcome all delegates and visitors to my own County today and I wish you a happy and informative two days. I know that some of you have been here in Dorset for several days already and I do hope that you have had an opportunity to visit other parts of the county, to see some of the amenities we can offer.

We have excellent speakers today and it gives me particular pleasure to welcome Lord Fellowes of West Stafford, who will be addressing us later this morning – being a *Downton* devotee myself, I am particularly looking forward to hearing him speak. We also welcome his lovely wife, Lady Fellowes.

I know none of you will have missed the wonderful scarlet coat, in fact we have two scarlet coats here today, worn so proudly by another of our Speakers – Mr Brian Cumming MBE – a warm welcome to you Brian and I am sure, in fact I know, you are going to be a big hit with the ladies here in Bournemouth! May I also take this opportunity to thank the National Chairman of the RBL for granting permission for the National RBL Standard to escort Brian into Conference today, and also to say a very big Thank You and Welcome, to Mr Norman Espie, the RBL National Standard Bearer, who has travelled from NI to be with us today.

It is always a pleasure to welcome our special friends from Scotland, Mrs Sandra Mackenzie, the National Chairman, RBLWS Scotland, and our dear friend Mrs Yvonne Marr, Secretary and Treasurer RBLWS Scotland. I had the pleasure and privilege of attending their Conference in beautiful Edinburgh last June, and the warm and friendly welcome I was given by all of their members will be one of the



lasting memories of my term as your Chairman, even though they did insist on serenading me with *Flower of Scotland!*

The Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League is once again represented by Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher Warren, who I am sure, like me, is very much looking forward to the next meeting of the RCEL, which is to be held at Buckingham Palace, under the Chairmanship of the new Grand President, HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York.

Also, may I extend a very warm welcome to our Conference to representatives from other charities whose beneficiaries, like ours, are associated with the ex-Service community. Mrs C Gibbon from the Association of Wrens; Colonel Audrey Smith – ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund Chairman; Mrs Helen Townend from Army Widows Association; Mrs Mary Brittan from the Wrens Benevolent Trust together with Mrs Sara Ayton, General Secretary of the Wrens Benevolent Trust. A very warm welcome to all of you ladies.

Last, but not least, from the Royal British Legion, I am delighted to give a warm and friendly welcome to the National Chairman of the RBL, Mr John Crisford who will be addressing Conference this afternoon. John is accompanied by the Director-General, Dr Chris Simpkins and I know that Chris has very recently returned from a trip to Australia, where a very special little person was waiting to say “hello” – well maybe not “say – exactly”! Chris on behalf of all our members here, may I offer to both you and Denise our heartfelt congratulations on the birth of your first grandchild, Stanley. It is also good to see our own representative, the Deputy Director-General, Mr John Graham who regularly attends our Central Committee meetings, although I am unsure of which particular sin John has committed to be given such an honour! Finally, may I welcome particularly, our National Vice-Presidents who are with us today, Elizabeth, the Dowager Countess of Scarbrough and Mrs Sara Jones CBE. Thank you very much indeed for being with us.’

A gift was presented to the Mayor and flowers presented to the Mayoress, Ms June Matthews.

The National Chairman then announced the results of the National Standard Bearers’ Competition as follows:

‘In first place, the winner of the Ashwanden Cup and National Standard Bearer for the coming year is Susan Parke, Northern Ireland District.

In second place and the winner of the Urwick Cup and Deputy National Standard Bearer is Rachel Perkins, West Midlands Region.

And in third place is Amanda Bearryman, Five Counties of the South West Region.’

She then moved on to the business of Conference.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from The President of the RBL Scotland Women’s Section and National Life Vice-Presidents – Dame Mary Bridges DBE, Mrs E E Nash OBE, Mrs P Valler OBE and Mrs Doris Ingham OBE. The remaining Women’s Section National Vice-Presidents and other invited representatives from a number of Service and civilian organisations.



5. REBECCA CROOKSHANK – WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT

Rebecca was introduced to Conference and spoke about her military background and her new career, based on her love of the creative arts explaining why she is now pursuing a career in writing and performing. Rebecca is embarking on a one-woman show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. There will be a collection for the Women's Section during each performance.



6. DECLAN TRAYNOR – ARENA TRAVEL

Declan introduced himself as Chairman of Arena Travel, the tour operator contracted by the RBL to organise and run Remembrance Travel Tours. He talked about their work and how in particular they are now helping veterans and relatives travel to events overseas.

7. LOYAL GREETINGS

The Loyal Greetings sent to our President, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal on behalf of the membership were then read by the Acting National Secretary:

'The National Chairman, Officers and members of the Royal British Legion Women's Section gathered at the Bournemouth International Centre for the Annual Conference on 15 and 16 April 2015 send loyal and affectionate greetings to Your Royal Highness, our President.

Your Royal Highness would wish to know that in the last year, we disbursed in the order of £400,000 in benevolence, the bulk of which went to widows in receipt of the Women's Section Allowance. Our other main areas of benevolent work are the grants made through our Children's Welfare Scheme and the educational sponsorships made through our President's Award Scheme.

Fundraising efforts for the Women's Section continue to be impressive, albeit with a slight downturn in fundraising income in the last year. Our Counties and Branches conduct their own fundraising activities and contribute to our centrally co-ordinated benevolent disbursements. In addition, approximately £100,000 was raised by Women's Section branches specifically for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Our membership numbers continue to gradually decline. Today the membership stands at 31,500 but we are having some success in recruiting new members, particularly to our Military Wives and Girlfriends Group. This, we hope, will secure our long term future.

The Royal British Legion Women's Section would like to record it's heartfelt thanks to Your Royal Highness for your continued patronage as our President. We are proud to be amongst the organisations enjoying your interest and engagement.'

and the response from Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal:

'As President of the Royal British Legion Women's Section, I send my warm thanks and very best wishes to all members on the occasion of the Royal British Legion Women's Section Conference at Bournemouth on 15th and 16th April 2015. I hope you have a most enjoyable conference.

Anne.'

President

The Royal British Legion Women's Section



8. APPOINTMENT OF 12 SCUTINEERS AND SEVEN TELLERS

LIST OF SCUTINEERS

Mrs A Hill (Chief Scutineer)	Whitstable Branch
Miss A Manchett	Huntingdonshire County
Mrs S H Gilroy	Murton Branch
Mrs T Stott	Lancashire County
Mrs T Richardson	Cumbria County
Mrs B Poole-Taberner	Hatfield Heath Branch
Mrs S Hopkins	Bewdley Branch
Mrs J Edwards	Seal Branch
Mrs M Gibbard	Loughborough Branch
Mrs S Essery	Hampshire County
Miss J White	Christchurch Branch
Mrs J Milne	Christchurch Branch

LIST OF TELLERS

Mrs N Bowman	Cumberland County
Mrs H Batten	Heston Branch
Mrs D O'Dell	London Colney Branch
Mrs D Bontoft	District of Germany
Mrs F Aspinall	Chatteris Branch
Mrs C Jurss	District of Germany
Mrs L Dawson	District of Germany

9. MINUTES OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD IN LLANDUDNO 30 APRIL AND 1 MAY 2014

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.

PROPOSED:	Orpington
SECONDED:	Wroxham, Hoveton & District
APPROVED by:	Conference and signed

10. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No matters had been notified.

11. REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

The National Chairman addressed Conference as follows:

'When I received the Chairman's Badge last May, little did I realise the changes that fate had in store for our wonderful Organisation, but on balance I hope that we have overcome or are in the process of dealing with, all the unexpected problems that have come our way. The loss of our National Secretary was a bitter blow and I know that some people believe that this has left us very vulnerable. But ladies I say we must be thankful for all that Colonel Beattie did for us. His guidance and knowledge of the military was first class, his humour was second to none, his dogged determination to ensure that the Women's Section had a relevant role to play in today's world is to be commended; all the things that endeared us to him, we must be thankful for. When and if he is replaced we will, I know, be extremely lucky to find another person with such exceptional qualities. This leads me very conveniently into the next major issue that your Central Committee has had to face. As you will be aware, for the first time our fundraising income, on paper, did not reach the anticipated levels we had hoped for. I will not go into the monetary details here to steal Tony's thunder – he can explain it much better than I! But you, as well as I know, that what appears on paper does not necessarily tell the whole story. The branch, county



and district Financial Year for 2013/14 ended on 30 June – three months earlier than in any previous year, so in effect a nine month fundraising period. I am hopeful therefore that this is just a temporary blip and that the majority of the money your branches, counties and districts raised during your busiest time – the summer months – will come in at the end of this Financial Year, proving beyond any doubt that as an Organisation we can function, without having to resort to dipping into our reserves.

However, this fall in income has highlighted some major concerns, both for us and the RBL Board of Trustees. This has resulted in a paper, entitled “Future of the Women’s Section” being tabled at the January and March meetings of the Board. The first paper centred on the fact of our fall in income and falling membership numbers and the second outlined the Central Committee’s responses to our current situation. There is now to be a third paper prepared for the September meeting which will seek to prove that the Women’s Section does have a unique and important role to play within the RBL and to ensure that we are given the support and freedom to continue with our valuable work.

Nationally, our relations with the RBL are good. We were required to undertake a review of our Welfare Schemes and with the exception of the Welfare Breaks, all were found to be fit for purpose and did not mirror those offered by the RBL. As many of you will be aware, clients wishing to take a Welfare Break following illness or bereavement have been falling steadily over a number of years. In some ways, this is not surprising as our Scheme in essence, only provided a break for a lady, unaccompanied, at a hotel or guesthouse. The new arrangements now see a guaranteed number of breaks per year, often at a Legion run establishment, where ladies are more likely to find likeminded companionship from the other residents. Likewise our Family Breaks. With ever-rising cost and the high expectations of our clients on the type of break we could offer, it made sense for us to incorporate our Family Breaks into those offered by the RBL, again with a guaranteed number per year. So ladies, not a complete takeover – more, on our part, a realisation and acceptance that there was a better way to achieve what was needed and for us having the courage to say “yes, you probably can deliver it better!” Once again ladies, Women’s Section’s support of the Poppy Appeal during the Closed Period has been outstanding with large numbers of our Members acting as Poppy Appeal Organisers and Collectors in their local areas.

I am sure, like me, many of you have been asking what impact the new Welfare systems introduced by the RBL are having on the Women’s Section. I myself asked the very same question of our Welfare Adviser at a recent Welfare Steering Group meeting. The response was that, at the present time, things appear to be working reasonably well, but it is too early to judge whether there has been any significant increases in applications for assistance from the Women’s Section. Our Welfare Adviser, Alison Cameron-Wood, has already visited the Pop In Centre in Cardiff and I know that many of you have visited the new Regional Centres that have opened in your own areas. Initial reports from our Members say that they receive a very warm welcome and that genuine interest is shown in the Schemes we are offering. I would urge you all to visit the Centres in your area, and if possible, to find out more about the volunteer roles that are available, so that once again the Women’s Section can demonstrate the vital role that we can play.

Moving now to other topics – firstly, our new Cup Competitions. I must say at the outset that as this is the initial year of the amended competitions, there are likely to be some minor hiccups! But ladies, I’m sure that you will all agree, that the small team – Doris Ingham, Marie Skells, Alison Tindale, Deborah Stevenson, Heather Spence and Sandra Fishlock, did a magnificent job in making our Cup Competitions relevant to the twenty-first century and have managed to achieve a balance in keeping what was good and amending the not quite so relevant. Thank you ladies and we will no doubt see the proof of your success tomorrow.

In line with the theme of the year, which seemed to be “All Change!” the line-up of Central Committee has been no exception to this rule. In September we received the news from Lynne Joyce, our National Treasurer that she would be unable to continue to fulfil her duties from the end of November, as she would be starting a new career, in the Army! In reality this was working in the field of Welfare for the Army. We were all extremely sorry to see Lynne leave us and would now like to formally place on record our grateful thanks for all her hard work and support during her four and a half-year term of Office as



our National Treasurer. After a great deal of soul searching and discussions at the Finance Committee, the recommendation was put to Central Committee that we would not fill the position of National Treasurer, but instead would look carefully at the implications of appointing a Chair of Finance from within the Central Committee.

As happened in 2013, our September meeting was held at the National Memorial Arboretum when Central Committee had the opportunity to view our Women's Section Garden, which I have to say looked weed free. I later found out that Julia Walker, together I believe with Sheila Thompson, had spent the morning on their hands and knees removing every trace of interlopers. As you know, our garden is a "work in progress" and we are extremely grateful to Julia for all the time and effort she puts in at the NMA, not just doing weeding, but also consulting with the NMA staff on suitable plants and organising the upkeep of our benches. Also in September we were overjoyed to welcome the first of our Welsh representatives at our meeting. Eileen Williams (aka Titch) made a tentative debut around this time and I am delighted to say that she is still with us and will continue to represent the north of Wales for the coming year. Pat Chrimess' replacement, Mrs Karen Brown also attended her first meeting at the September meeting at the NMA and together with Eileen has made her mark on our Committee. Furthermore at this time it was obvious that Mrs Pat Berry of the North Western Region, was not in the best of health and we were concerned not only for her, but also for the members within the Region she represented, as they were not receiving all the up-to-date information. As Mrs Berry did not wish to resign totally from Central Committee, a suggestion was made that a temporary appointment be made to cover Mrs Berry's absence and Mrs Liz Harrison joined us at our January meeting. Liz has proved to be an exceptionally good "stand-in" and the National Officers and members of the Committee wish to place on record their thanks to Liz and to add, that in the fullness of time, our hope is that she will eventually become a "substantive" member of the Central Committee. Then, just as we were welcoming one new member, we received the sad news that another of our number, Mrs Margaret Earley had decided that due to ill-health, she was having to tender her resignation. Margaret has served on Central Committee for some 17 years and her departure has left a huge void. Julia Walker, Margaret's opposite member for the East Midlands Region has kindly offered to cover the whole Region in the interim and we are exceptionally grateful to Julia for this kind and timely offer. Finally, last but not least, at our March meeting we were delighted to welcome Mrs Doreen Warlow, our representative from South Wales to her first meeting. It was a great feeling for all of us to know that at last, all areas within our Organisation had a voice on the Central Committee.

At the end of this Conference we will be saying a very sad but fond farewell to Mrs Margaret Harris, the representative for the Five Counties of the South West. Margaret's contribution to the Women's Section over many years has been immeasurable and I know that at our future meetings we will all miss her sensible, down to earth, truly Cornish common sense. Pat, Tony and I have been very appreciative of the support we have received from all members of the Central Committee. Their varied expertise and talents have enabled us to have a representative voice from throughout the country. We are acutely aware that we have not always got things right – it is probably fair to say we have helped in some places and hindered in others, but ladies please do try to understand that we cannot please everyone all of the time, but in everything we have done we have tried to act in the best interests of the Women's Section and not what might please individuals.

We have received great support from our National and Life Vice-Presidents. I have already told you of the assistance of Mrs Doris Ingham with the Cup Competition Review. Mrs Barbara Frankland has been on hand with advice regarding our Handbook and Byelaws. Lady Grey of Codnor represented us at the National Arboretum on Armistice Day and Mrs Janie Martin attended our meeting held at the NMA. The continued support and interest shown by all of our Vice-Presidents is greatly appreciated. Sadly, Janie who was to present our Cups and Awards tomorrow has had a family bereavement and is not now able to be with us. Even as I am speaking to you, Lisa is still frantically trying to find a suitable replacement. So ladies all I can say at this point is "keep your eyes peeled, to see who will be wearing a picture hat tomorrow to undertake this important duty for us".



Our sub-committees' have also been working hard in the background. The Conference Sub-committee, under the capable Chairmanship of Mrs Joan Murray has worked together well in organising every aspect of Conference 2015 and all fingers are now crossed that not too many hiccups will be occurring along the way! On the President's Award Committee we welcomed Mrs Sheila Wright as the invited member and Mrs Wendy Bromwich as the past National Chairman. This year will see the end of a three-year term on this Committee for Kay Sease. Kay has been a major contributor to all discussions and her knowledge of Welfare will be greatly missed – Thank you Kay for all your hard work and diligence during your time on the PAC. Kay's successor will be selected by ballot at our first Central Committee meeting, immediately after Conference and the person selected will serve for a three-year term of office.

Unusually, all the members of the Finance Committee were new to post last May so will continue in post for the coming year. At their meeting on 8 April they passed a resolution to recommend to the Central Committee that Miss Sandra Fishlock be invited to become our Chair of Finance for the coming year. That will be subject to amendment to bye-law to be passed hopefully (I can't influence you) and under discussion later today. I would like to take this opportunity Sandra (if we do get that far) to wish you well with this new responsibility.

The Welfare Steering Group were delighted to welcome back Glenda Sprackland following her accident last year. As we all know, Glenda's knowledge of our Welfare Schemes and her sound, down to earth approach are most welcome. Sadly, as you are probably aware, Mrs Doris Ingham is recovering from a nasty fall herself and so was unable to join us at our last meeting. To our third member, Pat Ayres – I would say is, "Pat, please take extra care of yourself!" Seriously, the contribution that all three of these ladies make to our Organisation is outstanding – Thank you ladies.

Our 2p Mile initiative was a resounding success, raising in excess of £15,000 and I know that many of you have continued to save your 2p coins for us – PLEASE CONTINUE TO DO SO! AND I believe there is a new initiative in the offing which will be targeting those little annoying 5p coins that get caught up in the seams of your purses, but more about that later in Conference.

It would be very remiss of me not to mention our "shop window" team – our Standard Bearers and in particular our NPM and DNPM, Sheila Webster and Alison Tindale. During their first year in office, despite many trials and tribulations, they have done a first class job. Central Committee is aware in some areas there are problems in holding Joint Competitions. Note Mr Crisford, I said some areas, as I know equally there are some areas where it works like a dream. Be assured that this is something that we are actively trying to address, together with the RBL. Our National Standard Bearer, Rachel Perkins has also done us proud on the occasions she has represented us and I am sure that you all felt pride in her, as I certainly did, as she crossed the floor at the Royal Albert Hall proudly carrying our National Standard. Thank you Rachel.

During the past year it has been both a privilege and pleasure to visit branches and counties and to have an opportunity to meet and talk with our grassroots members. Of particular pleasure to me, was my flying visit to Mundersley Branch in Norfolk, where I joined the members for a celebration tea in honour of their achieving an increase in both membership and donations to our Schemes over the past three years. The second, was an evening spent with one of our Administrative Branches, Harpenden where we all enjoyed a delicious Fish and Chip Supper and they told me of their fundraising activities – very skilful ladies with their needles and threads and they set themselves the target of raising a minimum of £1,000 per year for our Benevolent Fund and I understand that they have reached that target for this year.

Looking forward, 1 July will see the amalgamation of the Lancashire's into one single County. This decision was not taken lightly but was a majority decision of the three existing areas. I would like to thank all those who have served as officers in the "old" set up and to thank all the members of Lancashire for their support. I am sure that as a "united" County, Lancashire will embrace the challenges ahead and I would like to wish all those who volunteer to be Officers in the "new" set up every success for the future.

Our 2015 Conference has seen some changes. As a start, some members of Central Committee have



kindly offered to share rooms in the hotel – and I know of one pairing where they will definitely be chatting away all night! The second major change is that we will have no official entertainment tonight. This does sadden me, because I have some very happy memories of our entertainment evenings over many years, when we all had such fun together. But sadly, such evenings do need to be self-funding and it can be difficult for the Conference Committee to keep coming up with new ideas which will appeal across a wide range of ages. So we are trying “**doing nothing**” and I know we would welcome your feedback on this decision, after Conference – when you will all know if you have missed it or not! Having said that, may I just give you all a word of caution, Bournemouth as well as boasting golden sands, beautiful gardens and fantastic shops, does have a reputation for being a popular venue for Stag and Hen weekends with a diverse nightlife – so please ladies do not let me hear on the local radio or read in the *Daily Echo* that Women’s Section members have been misbehaving!

I cannot finish without making mention of our HO Staff, Tony, Lisa, Avril, Alison, Rachael, Debbie, Janet, Catherine (with a C) and Katherine (with a K). No-one here today will need me to tell them that our staff are the biggest asset we have. Never once in all the time I have been coming to Head Office, have I heard any of them complain, moan or groan. Each and every one of them is a little gem. I think the nicest thing I can say to them and to you is to actually quote what one member of our temporary staff, Belinda Ainsley, said to me as she was leaving – “I have enjoyed every day that I have worked here and it has been a pleasure for me to come to work. I have done plenty of temporary jobs in the past, but I can truthfully say that this one has been the best. All of the staff have been kind and friendly and have gone out of their way to make me feel welcome and one of the team. I am really sorry that for personal reasons I have to leave but if things were different I would gladly work here for a very long time”.

In concluding my report, may I take this opportunity to thank you the Members for your continued support. As I said at the beginning of my Report, 2014–15 has not turned out to be quite the smooth transition from Wendy’s Chairmanship, as we might have hoped, but I would like you to hold on to these few words.

“Contrary to popular rumours circulating around, (1) We are not bankrupt and (2) the RBL is not trying to close us down! The Women’s Section is too valuable an asset to them, to allow that to happen”

UNITED WE STAND but DIVIDED WE **COULD** FALL!

12. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Acting National Secretary/Accountant, Mr Tony Wright presented the Annual Accounts for the Women’s Section for the year ending 30 September 2014.

Members were reminded that the accounting year for the National Accounts is still October–September, unlike the branch and county year which is now July–June.

A copy of the accounts had been sent to each branch and it was hoped all delegates had had the opportunity to discuss the figures with their members. He reported on the more significant aspects of the accounts.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Income

Total Income at £743,202 showed a decrease of £53,979 on last year’s figure. The Membership Fees at £200,554 showed a decrease of £16,684 and is an area of real concern. The Membership fee is the largest source of income for the General Fund and the current level of fee is not offsetting the steady decline in member numbers.

Fundraising Income at £358,372 was down by £85,509 on the previous year, although this was partially offset by the Purse income of £64,188. Several branches and counties have informed Head Office that their fundraising figure was lower this time because some of the monies raised after June 2014 will not be sent in until June 2015. The Accountant urged members not to hold on to funds locally any longer



than necessary. It helps to have the money in sooner rather than later as disburse our benevolent funds are dispensed throughout the year.

Legacies brought in £4,000 and there had been no Grand Draw in 2014. This had returned for 2015. The other sources of income are broadly in line with expectations.

Expenditure

Expenditure, at £982,010 showed an increase of £54,100 which is almost exclusively in the Benevolent Fund.

Initial deficit for the year is £238,808. There was an unrealised gain in the value of investments of £128,357 as at 30 September 2014, meaning a reduction in Accumulated Funds of £110,451 being £32,780 General Fund and £77,761 Benevolent Fund. The value of investments can go down as well as up, so the initial deficit figure is the one that causes concern.

Benevolent Fund

Expenditure of £629,873 exceeded income of £472,621 by £157,252. Unrealised gain in the value of investments as at 30 September of £79,581 meant that the Accumulated Benevolent Fund was reduced by £77,671. It was pleasing that expenditure on Benevolence increased by £60,777, as this is the main reason for our organisation. The Women's Section Allowance, Children's and President's Award Schemes continue to provide vital service. There is a concern that Benevolent Fund income dropped by £33,015.

General Fund

Expenditure of £352,137 exceeded income of £270,581 by £81,556. Unrealised gain in the value of investments as at 30 September of £48,776 meant that the Accumulated General Fund was reduced by £32,780.

The overall General Fund Expenditure was broadly in line with the previous year but there were a couple of variances to as below:

- Salaries down by £5,844
- Website, Advertising and Publicity, taken together, down by £7,332
- Conference up by £12,950 (Llandudno 2014 was a more expensive venue than Eastbourne 2013).

A breakdown of our Investments of £4,626,089 was shown.

Take the investment figure of £4,626,089 and add Net Current Assets of £100,371, the Accumulated Funds are £4,726,460, being General Fund £1,586,047 and Benevolent Fund £3,140,413.

SUMMARY

'In summary, yet again, you show that the Women's Section is alive and well, providing tangible care and support to the Serving and ex-Service community through our distinct and specially tailored welfare schemes, for their families and children. All in addition to providing excellent support to the Poppy Appeal during the closed season from mid-October to mid-November.

The figures do show however, that 2013/14 was a difficult year but I am confident that our fundraising will remain strong and that planned cost saving measures will have the desired effect.'

The Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 2014 was APPROVED by Conference.

13. MOTIONS/AMENDMENTS TO BYE-LAWS

The results may be found at the end of these minutes.

14. ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

National Chairman
Mrs Marilyn Humphry

National Vice-Chairman
Mrs Pat Chrimes



15. NATIONAL LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS AND NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Conference confirmed the following Life Vice and Vice-Presidents:

Past National Chairman

Mrs W Bromwich JP

National Life Vice-Presidents

Mrs E E Nash OBE

Dame Mary Bridges DBE

Mrs D Ingham OBE

Mrs M A Cole OBE

Mrs D P Valler OBE

National Vice-Presidents and Patronesses 2015/2016

Her Grace the Duchess of Grafton GCVO

Auriol, Marchioness of Linlithgow

Mrs V Kerr-Wilson

Elizabeth, Countess of Scarborough LVO

Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE

Mrs Barbara Frankland

Mrs J Andrew-Steer MBE

The Right Honourable the Countess Bathurst

The Lady Grey of Codnor

Mrs S Jones CBE, O ST J, DL, JP

Mrs B Underhill OBE

Mrs Janie Martin

EASTERN

WALES

WALES (PATRON)

METROPOLITAN

NORTHERN

NORTHERN

NORTHERN IRELAND

WEST MIDLANDS

NORTH WESTERN

SOUTH WESTERN

SOUTH EASTERN

EAST MIDLAND SHIRES

16. CONFIRMATION OF ELECTION OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2015/2016

EASTERN REGION

Mrs S Saban

Mrs M Skells

Miss J Walker

Mrs J Salter

Mrs A J Murray MBE

Mrs H Crosby

Mrs P Berry (Mrs L Harrison, Caretaker)

Mrs K Brown

Miss S Fishlock

Mrs M Cook

Mrs F Havergal

Mrs M Harris

Mrs E Williams

Mrs D Warlow

Miss A K Scase

Mrs A Morris RGN

Mrs S Thompson

EAST MIDLAND SHIRES

METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

NORTHERN AREA COUNTIES

NORTH WESTERN REGION

SOUTH EASTERN REGION

FIVE COUNTIES OF THE SOUTH WEST

WALES DISTRICT

WEST MIDLANDS COUNTIES

NORTHERN IRELAND DISTRICT

17. CONFIRMATION OF ELECTION OF TWO MEMBERS TO 2015/2016 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

NORTH WEST REGION

Mrs J Van-Boyd

REMAINING ON EASTERN

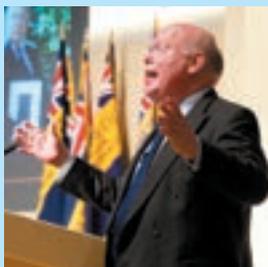
Mrs A L Rowlands



18. PLACE OF FUTURE CONFERENCE

2016 Southport

20 and 21 April CONFIRMED



19. ADDRESS BY JULIAN FELLOWES (LORD FELLOWES OF WEST STAFFORD), ACTOR, NOVELIST, FILM DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER

Julian Fellowes related the story of his life, talking about his childhood, his parents' disapproval of his desire to become an actor and his mother's gentle persuasion of his father to let him attend drama school. He talked about his acting career, both in the UK and the US and his experiences as a struggling young actor. He explained how this led to him writing for television and how this eventually led to him writing *Downton Abbey* and the meteoric rise to fame and international interest this led to.

A Vote of Thanks was given by the National Vice-Chairman and a gift presented.

20. MOTIONS/AMENDMENTS TO BYE-LAWS

The results can be found at the end of these minutes.

21. THE WELFARE SCENE BY ALISON CAMERON-WOOD

'Firstly can I please take this opportunity to introduce myself to you all, my name is Alison and I joined the Women's Section as the Welfare Adviser in September 2014 and have been in post now for seven months.

Previous to joining the Women's Section, I worked for 13 years in the housing sector initially with a local authority and then subsequently with a housing association.

From a military point of view, I was fortunate enough to have served for five years in the Women's Royal Naval Service; I have been married to my husband James for 28 years, twenty-six of which were as a military wife whilst he was serving in the Royal Navy prior to him leaving the service in 2013.

With regards to the Women's Section Allowance, formerly known as the Widows' Allowance, there were currently 197 beneficiaries as at 28 February 2015

- 184 receive the Women's Section Allowance
- 13 receive the Children's Allowance

We also administer five grants on behalf of other charitable organisations:

Name of organisation	Royal Artillery Charitable Fund	Royal Logistic Corp Association Trust	WRNS Benevolent Fund	RAF Benevolent Fund
Number of cases	1	1	2	1

In total we administer quarterly grants for 202 beneficiaries, which is a reduction of three from last year.

TV Licences

Beneficiaries who are under the age of 75, are entitled to apply for their TV licence to be paid by the Women's Section, the table shows that between October 2014 and February 2015, sixteen TV licences have been renewed on behalf of beneficiaries:



Month	Number	Cost
October 2014	6	£873.00
November 2014	2	£291.00
December 2014	3	£436.50
January 2015	5	£677.00
February 2015	0	£0.00
Total	16	£2,277.50

Children's Fund

By far the largest numbers of requests received are for the Children's Fund. Between October 2014 and February 2015, we received 153 requests for assistance.

The table below provides you with a break down of the request received on a month by month basis and the outcome of the request:

Month	Number of grants awarded	Number declined	Number under review
October 2014	21	10	0
November 2014	30	13	0
December 2014	23	7	0
January 2015	16	6	0
February 2015	20	7	1
Total	110	42	1

We are also starting to report the categories within which a grant is being approved as below:

Category	Number of grants awarded	Value of grants
Carpeting (child's bedroom)	7	£1,318.02
Child Care Costs	1	£500.00
Child's Furniture	70	£15,065.26
Essential Clothing	27	£4,608.51
School Equipment	1	£152.96
Clubs	3	£235.00
Family Holiday*	1	£0.00
Total	110	£21,879.75

*The family holiday has no cost against it as this was organised through TRBL on behalf of the Women's Section



How are we doing compared to last year?

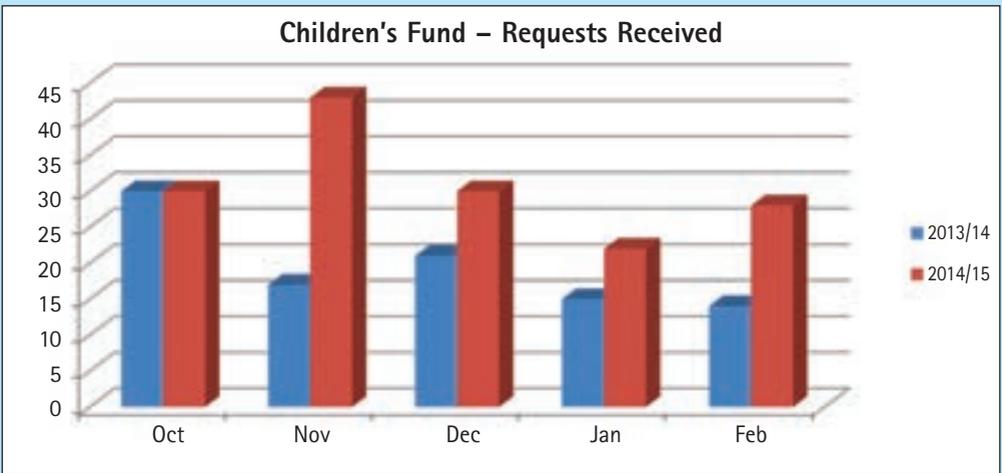
To assist with profiling our budget and identifying trends, we are starting to compare this year's data against the same periods for last year.

The table below shows the number of requests received against the Children's Fund.

For the first five months of the current financial year, we have received fifty-seven additional requests which is an increase of approximately 59%

	October		November		December		January		February		Total		Trend
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2014	2015	2014	2015	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	
Requests received	30	30	17	43	21	30	15	22	14	28	96	153	↑

Whilst November remained pretty constant, there has been an increase in the requests received over each of the following months, which is shown in the chart below:

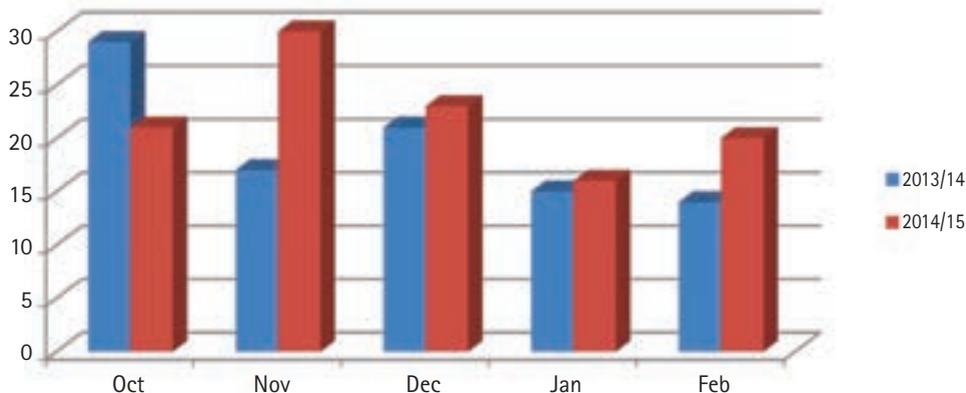


However, this increase has not been carried over into the number of grants awarded as this shows only an increase of just over 14%, which again is broken down on a month by month basis in the chart and graph below:

	October		November		December		January		February		Total		Trend
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2014	2015	2014	2015	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	
Grants awarded	29	21	17	30	21	23	15	16	14	20	96	110	↑



Children's Fund – Grants Awarded



Part of my role will be to ensure that we keep up-to-date with regards to changes in legislation, which may have an impact on our current beneficiaries or increase in the number of families who may require our assistance such as:

- The Welfare Reform Act
 - Benefit Cap
 - Universal Credit
 - Working Tax Credit

It is also about building relationships between the Women's Section and other military organisations such as:

- Army Families Federation
- SSAFA

As well as ensuring that we work closely with our colleagues within TRBL

- Central Grants Team
- Customer Contact Centre
- Pop In Centres

As well as the Services themselves!

I have to be honest with you, prior to joining the Women's Section, I didn't know it existed. However, I feel that I am in a very privileged position of firstly working with a fantastic team and also being able to help families and individuals through Grants, on your behalf, which has only been made possible through your amazing fundraising efforts, so Thank You!

22. THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD SCHEME BY MRS WENDY BROMWICH JP

'For those of you who remember, the original purpose of the President's Award Scheme was for the Women's Section to provide support to gifted children, however as detailed in Alison's report – our new Welfare Adviser, reported that the requests for assistance are predominately being received from serving, ex-Service personnel and their spouses, which has led the committee to ask for a review of the terms and conditions of the Scheme to be carried out. A paper with the finding and recommendations will then be presented to Central Committee in June 2015. As you have heard, we have Alison as our



Welfare Adviser and we are at a great advantage here, because she is an ex-Servicewoman, an ex-Service wife and she knows how we think, which is a great advantage, so thank you Alison.

As it currently stands, the scheme provides two separate bursaries for eligible beneficiaries

- Educational Scholarship
- Educational Grants

Educational Scholarships

These are:

- available to dependant children under the age of 21 to support them with their first degree
- scholarships of up to £1,500 are awarded for items such as:
 - course fees
 - books and equipment
 - travel and accommodation costs
 - school fees are also considered within the scholarship grant (up to a maximum of £3000)
- scholarships can be awarded over the term of the degree course, however an application will need to be made each year, which will need to include evidence of the progress being made by the beneficiary
- scholarships are not awarded for
 - studying overseas
 - or work placements

Educational Grants

These are:

- Available to serving, ex service personnel, dependants and spouses/partners wishing to complete educational courses or re-training schemes
- One off grants of up to £500 are awarded for items such as
 - course fees
 - books and equipment
 - travel costs
- Grants are not considered for any
 - applicant who resides outside the UK

The committee meets three times a year; in January, July and September. Requests for assistance are received either through email or direct to the Women's Section via a President's Award Scheme application form. All applications received are circulated to the committee members a week prior to the committee meeting in order that they can be reviewed and questions/comments noted. At the meeting each application is discussed and a majority decision made with regards to each request.

Following the meeting, emails or letters are sent out to each of the applicants letting them know the decision made by the committee with regards to their request for funding. The applicants are asked to formally accept the grant within two months of the offer being made and payment is made upon production of receipts/invoices. If the scholarship/grant is not claimed and this does happen, letters are sent to the applicants formally advising them of the withdrawal of the funds.

The number of applications made to the committee at the meetings held in 2014 are shown on page 54.



President's Award Scheme – Educational Scholarships

Month	Applications	Awarded	Declined	Value	Claimed	Outstanding
Jan – 14	1	0	1	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Jul – 14	12	12	0	£19,500.00*	£15,500.00	£4,000.00†
Sept – 14	4	2	2	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£0.00

Within the information relating to the educational scholarships:

- *The figure of £19,500 includes a grant of £3000 towards school fees, which is being claimed over the course of three terms
- †The outstanding figure of £4,000 includes one grant of £1,500 which has been withdrawn as no acceptance of the award was received and the remaining £2,500 will be withdrawn if not claimed by 30 June 2015
- The number of applications is at it's highest in July which is inline with university intake.

President's Award Scheme – Educational Grants

Month	Applications	Awarded	Declined	Value	Claimed	Outstanding
Jan – 14	7	6	1	£2,050.00	£1,678	£372.00*
Jul – 14	16	11	5	£3,654.00	£1,896.46	£1,757.54†
Sept – 14	21	13	8	£5,789.47	£3,589.47	£2,200.00

With regards to the education grants:

- *The figure of £372 has been withdrawn as applicants did not require the funds
- †The outstanding figure of £1,757.54 will be withdrawn if the funds are not claimed by 30 June 2015
- The trend with regards to requests for grants appears to be on the increase and the reason for this will be explored in the review currently being carried out by Alison

Whilst the dates for the committee meetings are fixed, the committee recognises that some applications need to be reviewed in between these date. Therefore if an urgent request is received, the application is circulated to the committee members via email or post, asking each member for their opinion with the final decision being made by the Chairman.

The applications received for educational grants and scholarships cover a wide spectrum including the following areas of study:

- Sciences
- Open university
- Medicine
- History
- Geography
- Languages
- Gas training course
- Midwifery
- Agriculture
- Law
- Teaching
- Nursing
- X ray

So through your fundraising, you have helped beneficiaries to become

- Doctors
- Teachers
- Nurses
- Midwives
- and Scientists, to name but a few!



In the spring circular we featured an article on Kerry Garraway who received assistance towards her studies and graduated from the University of Ulster with a 2:1 Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Biomedical Sciences in 2013.

Kerry stated that “the help from the President’s Award Scheme, it has meant that she could buy books and materials and it gave her help with childcare. The course has allowed her to show her daughter that you are never too old to learn something new and the importance of helping others. The hope is now that she will be able to earn enough money to support her child and give her the best opportunities in the future”.

Earlier this year, Kerry contacted us to say that she has now been offered and taken a job in Glasgow, where she will be responsible for processing the blood tests taken on new born babies in Glasgow and surrounding areas and so the ladies from Scotland, I think you will find that very interesting.

We are fortunate that we receive quite a few updates from our beneficiaries who like to keep us up to date with the progress they are making with their studies and also the difference the funding we have provided has made to them.

Amy Smith

I am writing to thank you for awarding me the President’s Award Scholarship and to update you on my progress on my history course at Oxford Brookes University. I am thoroughly enjoying the course and my first term has gone very well. I have quickly settled into my new surroundings and the scholarship that has been awarded to me has helped greatly towards this. The money provided by the scholarship for the accommodation has provided me with extra funds for buying books and stationery, necessary tools for completing the assignments I have been set during my first term, which I may not have been able to afford otherwise. Although I have not had to complete any exams during my first semester at Oxford Brookes, I have been given various written assignments including essays and the analysis of primary sources. For those assignments I have received a variety of grades, a couple of firsts and multiple 2:1s. With the Grant provided by the PAS, I feel that my first term at university would have been much more uncomfortable without this extra help.

Caitlin Mack (message from Caitlin’s mother)

I am very grateful for the support of your organisation and am happy to inform you of Caitlin’s mock GCSE results, all A, A and one B, this would not have been possible without your support and she is eternally grateful*

Chris Hardley

I was writing to inform you of my final grades for the last year with regards to my bursary grant received as I believe you take note of these (and I will be reapplying for funding in the academic year starting September 2015 – I am currently working abroad until then).

2.1 Overall with:

1st in Portuguese

2.1 in War and Security in World Politics

2.1 International Relations Theories and Contemporary Issues

2.1 in Spanish



Nicole Parnill

I am writing to say a big thank you for the money I received from you last year which helped me to buy a laptop. Studying my BSc (Hons) in Psychology through the Open University would have been almost impossible without this.

I have just completed and passed my first assignment and received an overall grade B, with a particularly brilliant score on my final essay. I am enjoying the degree so much that I decided to continue onto my next assignment straight away.

So ladies, once again, I would like to thank you for your continued fundraising for the beneficiaries over the many years since the President's Award commenced and thank you for doing it now. Thank you very much Madam Chairman, thank you ladies.'

23. WELFARE STEERING GROUP BY MRS PAT AYRES MBE

'The purpose of the Welfare Steering Group is to review the Women's Section welfare activity on a twice yearly basis to consider new initiatives and ideas with regards to the schemes which we currently fund and also to look to identify new areas of need which we, as an organisation could consider providing funding for.

The group consists of the following members:

- Marilyn Humphry – Group Chairman
- Pat Chrimes – Group Vice-Chairman
- Glenda Sprackland
- Doris Ingham OBE
- Pat Ayres MBE

All recommendations proposed by the group are referred through to the Central Committee for their consideration. At the last two meetings held, the WSG have:

- Considered as to whether or not assistance with regards to the Children's Fund, should be extended to cover those families permanently located overseas. This is being covered in Motion No. 5
- Approved changes to the Annual Interim Report for the Women's Section Allowance, as it has been identified that only a small percentage of those beneficiaries eligible for their TV licence to be paid for by the Women's Section, claim against this element. So we have added in two additional questions to ensure beneficiaries are aware of this option:

Are you under 75 years of age	Yes	No
Do you wish to apply for the Women's Section to pay for your TV Licence?	Yes	No

For those who answer yes to both questions Alison, our Welfare Adviser, will make contact with the beneficiaries direct to go through the process with them.

- We have also added in questions relating to the usage of chiropodists and podiatrists and if these services are being used, are they chargeable? As this may be a new area of assistance we could wish to help with.

We are always looking at new ways in which we can help our beneficiaries and we are currently looking at health and well being, so can you please let us know if you make use of the following services?

Chiropodist	Yes	No	Podiatrist	Yes	No
Are these services free?	Yes	No			



Alison will collate the feedback received and report her findings to the Group, when they next meet later this year in September.

We have also looked at the format of the meetings and have agreed that specific topics should be discussed to ensure that our meetings are productive, meaningful and forward thinking with regards to the assistance we can provide to those in need of our help.

Therefore on that basis we agreed that the following information would be provided by the Welfare Adviser prior to the meetings taking place;

- Number of requests for assistance received
- Number of cases approved or declined
- Value of grants awarded (also split by category i.e. clothing, furniture etc)
- Comparison of requests being received with previous year

So how will we use this information?

As a group we will look at the following . . .

- Number of requests received – is the need increasing?
- Number of cases approved or declined – with regards to the cases being declined, what are the reasons; can we use this information to identify new areas of need?
- Value of grants awarded – are there any budget implications?
- Year on year comparison – this information will be used to identify trends, are there specific months when more requests are received?

Audit

Prior to the start of the March meeting, two members of the group undertake a random check of cases where grants have been awarded. This is to ensure that the policies in place are being followed by the Welfare Adviser. The findings of the audit are reported to the group during the course of the meeting, which follows the inspection.

In March 2015 a total of twenty-two cases were reviewed and all were found to be compliant.

We are fortunate that we receive quite a few thank you cards, letters and emails from either beneficiaries or their caseworkers as below:

Adam and Kathryn (grant awarded in December 2014 – children's buggy)

"Thank you for the recent help you provided us with for baby equipment. The girls are already enjoying the safety and comfort of adventures in their lovely pram. Your kindness and generosity are very much appreciated and will not be forgotten"

Dan – SSFAA (grant awarded in February 2015 – children's bedroom furniture)

"What a lovely start to the day! Yes I will tell the family the good news this morning. Many thanks to you and the Team"

John – SSFAA (grant awarded in November 2014, child care costs)

"Thank you so much I have informed the family of your generosity and like me they are truly grateful"

Jennie – SSFAA (grant awarded in December 2014, essential clothing)

"Thank you to TRBLWS for you kind grant towards winter clothing for the twins. With the worry of her husband's illness and him not being able to work for 10 months it has been a very stressful time for her trying to manage the family budget. Thank you for all your help with this case it is much appreciated"

As you can see, people are really appreciative of the work that you do. On behalf of the Welfare Steering Group and all the beneficiaries you have supported and continue to support can I please say THANK YOU!



24. ADDRESS BY MR JOHN CRISFORD BSC HONS, NATIONAL CHAIRMAN, RBL

The National Chairman talked about the changes that the Legion has been going through. He mentioned the history of the founding of the Women's Section and talked about a personal experience of his as a young father. He talked about the Women's Section welfare schemes and how they can be improved and changed to adapt with the times. He reiterated the importance of the responsibility the RBL Board of Trustees (including the Women's Section Chairman) has and the consequences of neglecting or ignoring these responsibilities. He stated that the Legion and the Women's Section must carry out their work in line with the rules and regulations, as set out by the Board of Trustees. This included modernising the Legion which he said the Women's Section had chosen so far not to do in line with the rest of the Legion. He warned that the Board will be keeping an eye on the whole of the organisation, including the Women's Section and asked that the Women's Section co-operates with the Legion in order to keep things going.

A vote of thanks was given by Sandra Saban and a gift presented.

25. MOTIONS/AMENDMENTS TO BYE-LAWS

The results can be found at the end of these minutes.

CLOSE OF THE FIRST DAY OF CONFERENCE

26. THE STANDARD BEARERS PARADE

The Standards paraded through the Lower Gardens, Bournemouth led by the Royal Artillery Band to the War Memorial, where there was a Wreath-laying Ceremony followed by a Sunset Beating Retreat.





SECOND DAY OF CONFERENCE – THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2015 at 9.30 am

27. MORNING PRAYERS WERE LED BY REVEREND PETER HILLS

28. NEW FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE – 5P VE DAY 70TH ANNIVERSARY CHALLENGE

The 8 May 2015 is the 70th anniversary of VE Day. To mark this momentous occasion a proposal has been made to have a fundraiser similar to the 2p mile challenge, which proved very popular and raised over £15,000. This time we would be collecting 5p for every day since 8 May 1945 – 8 May 2015, (excluding leap year days), which equates to £1,277.50p. Good luck with the challenge.

29. PRESENTATION OF CUPS AND CERTIFICATES BY MRS WENDY BROMWICH JP, PAST NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

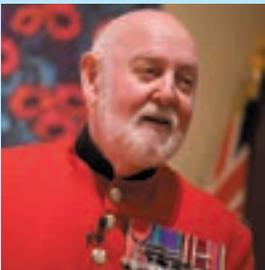
Mrs W Bromwich JP presented the Cups and Awards to many representatives from winning branches and counties.

A list of the Awards may be found at the end of the minutes.

Mrs Bromwich addressed conference:

‘Ladies (and the few gentlemen that are around). I have no notes to talk from, but after 1980 when I started being a member of staff for the Women’s Section, cup competitions in the northern area where I was a Northern Area Secretary were hard fought and I am pleased to see that Northern Area do so well. Thank you ladies. But all of the cup competitions have meant a lot to me over the years. I think you know that I was on the staff that dealt with them. So I’ve seen so many of you over the years come and up and collect prizes – please, please carry on and please give your time to the Women’s Section as you are now. We are so important ladies and we must carry on. Thank you ladies.’

A vote of thanks was given by Kay Scase and a gift presented.



30. ADDRESS BY MR BRIAN CUMMING MBE, CHELSEA PENSIONER

Brian talked about his introduction to the Royal Hospital Chelsea and how, as a former soldier and widower, he decided to apply to become a resident after recalling a chance meeting with a Chelsea Pensioner some years before. He talked about how the Pensioner gave him a tour of the Hospital and its history. He talked about being asked to stay for four days at the Hospital to see if he would like to live there and his slight doubts about moving from a three-bedroom house to a small bedroom accommodation with shared facilities. After being accepted, he moved in. He said how

much he loved living at the Hospital with no bills to pay, on-site doctors and hospital staff and the introduction of women to the Hospital. He also mentioned the history of the Scarlet Coat designed in the 1700s by the Duke of Marlborough and the regulations that apply at the Hospital. He mentioned the facilities at the Hospital and showed picture slides of the Hospital with drawings as it was in 1682 as well as photos of the statue of King Charles II, who was the Hospital’s Founder. He then talked about Royal visits to the Hospital including visits by HRH Duchess of Cornwall and HRH Prince Harry. Brian then talked about the food festivals that are held at the Hospital as well as the dedicated seats the Chelsea Pensioners have at famous sporting venues such as Stamford Bridge and Twickenham. Brian said that they had schoolchildren from all around the world as visitors as well as various christenings, weddings and funerals at the Hospital Chapel designed by Sir Christopher Wren which is also the Parish Church. Along with this, Brian mentioned that he does a lot of tours speaking about the history of the Royal



Hospital as he has found that more people know about the Yeoman of the Guard at the Tower of London than the Chelsea Pensioners. However, he also mentioned the kindness and generosity of people around the UK who often offer to buy the Pensioners drinks in a pub or even a full meal in a restaurant. Chelsea Pensioners have to have served at least 12 years in the ranks before being accepted and no matter what rank you were in the Army, you are all equal as a Chelsea Pensioner. Brian mentioned that his talk was also a recruiting drive for any ladies at the Women's Section who were shortly retiring after Service.

A Vote of Thanks was given by Mrs Margaret Harris and a gift presented.

31. NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S SPECIAL AWARDS

National Chairman's Certificate of Appreciation:

- Mrs Margaret Harris, Retiring Central Committee Representative
- Mrs Margaret Witherspoon, Retiring Standard Bearer Marshal and Judge

32. VOTE OF THANKS BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

'In respect of our Conference, I would very much like to thank Mrs Joan Murray who has been our Conference Chairman. She has done an excellent job. She's been a member of the Sub-Committee several times, but this is the first time that the buck has stopped with her. A job well done Joan and our thanks. The Conference Committee, they have worked so well as a team. I know that they had to dash out and buy some irons, Argos' cheapest, so that they could iron the tablecloth. But throughout this Conference, whenever we've seen them, they've had a smile on their face, they've been dashing off, they've been down here, God knows what hour, they have been absolutely fantastic. So to Joan's team, the Conference Sub-Committee – our grateful thanks.

To Sheila, Alison and the Marshals our grateful thanks, and I would particularly like to thank Maureen Witherspoon who I understand is hanging up her pace stick this year. Our Regional, County and Branch Standard Bearers – thank you to everyone. You are our shop window, all of you and they've all disappeared outside so would the regionals please be able to pass on our thanks to them. This has been a new venture for Sheila and Alison in their first year in office and I think they've done an absolutely excellent job. I'd like to thank Rachel, she's been an absolutely outstanding National Standard Bearer; Pat and I hadn't really met Rachel before this time last year and we went to St Paul's, the three of us, to a Service – let's just say, we got to know Rachel the night before!

I'd like to thank our Special Guest Awards Presenter – Wendy who is about to become one of our National Life Vice-Presidents but not yet! She's dying to get this badge! It'll be inspected, front and back, it'll be like being in the Girl Guides, have you polished it?! I think you will agree ladies that we've had some outstanding speakers at our Conference – Lord Fellowes of West Stafford and Mr John Crisford of the RBL. Last but not least: this morning's entertainment – Mr Brian Cumming. I would also like to thank all our stallholders, particularly those who were selling things on behalf of the Royal British Legion, but all of you and the stand managers and I'd particularly like to thank Mrs Jenny Dyer who's always been there to support our Conference, so thank you Jenny. I know you do a lot behind the scenes, setting up this hall with the team so thank you very much. I would like to thank those who helped with registration, selling raffle tickets and all those sort of jobs and also, those who have judged our cup competitions.

Thank you very much indeed when I think of our cup competitions today, I don't know about you, but I noticed branches (I didn't even know existed shall we say) that were coming up and it was lovely to see and so thank you to the team who updated the cup forms and thank you to all of the branches for entering, that was absolutely fantastic. I'd like to give a special thank you to our high vis jacket men from yesterday afternoon who I understand were David, Steve, Bob and Tom, if there's anybody else who



should be added to that list – they did an absolutely sterling job and I'd like to give a particular thanks to a porter from the Marsham Court Hotel who very kindly volunteered to go along, take the training in the lowering of the Standard yesterday afternoon. Now you may not believe this, but he had to go along for Health and Safety training! I believe his name was David Brown, the Deputy National Parade Marshal. David thank you for lowering the Standard yesterday afternoon so beautifully, thank you for allowing Pat and I to use your room to change in before we came to the Standard Bearers' Competition, thank you for carrying all my shoes and bags and everything to my room and well just thanks for everything David!

Pat has just given me a little note to remind you all that Conference 2016 is 19th to 21st April at Southport. Can I also take this opportunity to thank the venue staff for all their help and advice. They have been absolutely fantastic. When we came down in January/February for an initial visit, they were so helpful then, and they have been extremely helpful during our time here so I'd like to place on record on behalf of all of us, our thanks to the staff. Photographer Steve – who is now a conference regular, he is the new Barry and I hope that you have all got his website and his details, if not I'm sure a call to Head Office will get them for you. The audio/visual technicians – thank you so much for everything you have done, I don't think we've had any problems at all with the sound, they've all been able to hear us so thank you and it's nice that you're actually in the room for me to be able to thank you. Well done.

I would like especially to thank my Vice-Chairman Pat. Pat has been absolutely First Class over the past year. We have a little saying between us, because I need someone to talk to who I can trust who's not going to pass things on and Pat and I have this little saying which is "super-glued". Pat's lips are super-glued on many things; in fact I think she's finding it quite difficult to talk at times! She's been absolutely brilliant. Central Committee – they are a fantastic team. Every one of them, they all bring a special talent to our committee and their support of Pat and I has been outstanding this year. Thank you all so much and I know you'll all be there behind us to support us in the coming year. Our Life Vice-Presidents and our National Vice-Presidents – I would like to place on record our thanks for their continued help and support, I told you yesterday of things that they've specifically done, but it is good to know that they are there in the background if we need them and Pat and I had a lovely chat with Lady Scarbrough and we know we can have her support so that is absolutely fantastic. County and Branch Officers and your Committees – I'd like to thank each and every one of you because without you, we wouldn't have an organisation and I know it's not always easy and I know when it comes to AGM time and you say "anybody like to take over" and you get a sea of blank faces. Thank you for everything that you do for our organisation.

Finally, but by no means least – the membership, the ordinary members – those of you who go along to your meetings and make the tea every week, sell the raffle tickets. You are our absolute core and we thank you for all the support that you give us so please accept our most grateful thanks.'



33. RESULTS OF THE BOURNEMOUTH RAFFLE

	TICKET NUMBER AND COLOUR	PRIZE
1	YELLOW 775	£25 ARGOS VOUCHER
2	BLUE 615	£25 WAITROSE VOUCHER
3	YELLOW 160	£25 MARKS AND SPENCER VOUCHER
4	YELLOW 92	£25 BOOTS VOUCHER
5	BLUE 43	£25 BOOTS VOUCHER
6	YELLOW 660	£25 NATIONAL GARDEN VOUCHER
7	BLUE 283	£20 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
8	YELLOW 135	£20 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
9	WHITE 54	£20 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
10	BLUE 208	£20 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
11	BLUE 794	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
12	YELLOW 642	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
13	BLUE 641	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
14	WHITE 60	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
15	YELLOW 710	£15 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
16	YELLOW 679	£10 BOOTS VOUCHER
17	WHITE 24	WS JUTE BAG HAMPER
18	BLUE 702	ECHO FALLS WINE
19	YELLOW 591	HAMPER IN BLACK AND WHITE BASKET
20	YELLOW 672	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
21	WHITE 386	£20 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
22	WHITE 90	PURE & CLEAN BEAUTY GIFT SET
23	WHITE 317	LANSON CHAMPAGNE
24	BLUE 731	FINEST RESERVE PORT
25	YELLOW 200	£25 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
26	YELLOW 210	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
27	BLUE 644	PINK NOTEBOOK AND LIQUEUR CHOCOLATES
28	BLUE 610	MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
29	YELLOW 669	£25 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
30	BLUE 715	ONE FOR ALL VOUCHER £20
31	YELLOW 651	£20 DEBENHAMS VOUCHER
32	WHITE 209	£20 BOOTS VOUCHER
33	WHITE 206	OSCILLATING FAN HEATER
34	BLUE 251	£20 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
35	BLUE 665	BRUT CHAUMET PREMIUM
36	YELLOW 742	PHOTO FRAME



34. RESULTS OF THE GRAND DRAW 2015

	NAME	DRAW TICKET No.	PRIZE
1	P TALL	15807	£1,000
2	B HAMMOND	00960	HOLIDAY IN NEW FOREST FOR ONE WEEK
3	MRS P JONES	12327	TOUR OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND AFTERNOON TEA
4	MRS F ?/NORTHANTS	03154	TOUR OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA
5	VIVIANE RAYNER	23374	OYSTER BOX – DONATED BY MATTHEW BURT
6	K GOUGH	08175	£100 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
7	JOAN BAILEY	17170	LUSH – GIFT EXPERIENCE
8	SAM SKELLS	32230	£50 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
9	MRS A D DALE	083276	£40 BOOTS VOUCHER
10	SHIRLEY C	30652	£40 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER
11	B HYDEN	32162	FRAMED POPPY CROSS STITCH PICTURE
12	SWIFT	00796	JEWELLERY BOX
13	MRS U E EVERETT	30356	£25 ARGOS VOUCHER

Congratulations to all the lucky winners

35. VOTE OF THANKS TO CHAIRMAN BY CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

‘There are many among us who know how daunting it can be to Chair a meeting for the first time and must feel for you over the past two days of our Annual Conference. You’ve successfully steered us through all the procedures with assurance, certainly outwardly. What you felt deep down is totally impenetrable to everybody. Not only during Conference, but on every occasion that you have represented the Women’s Section you have shown great respect for our organisation; performing its’ ceremonial events with dignity and at fundraising events, letting your sense of fun and how to enjoy yourself shine through. We wish you success for the coming year; it’s been a privilege to serve as your Conference Committee Chairman (a first!) and to propose this vote of thanks. Conference, I ask you to join me in showing your appreciation for our National Chairman.’

36. MUSTER OF STANDARDS

The Muster of Standard was conducted by the National Parade Marshal, Mrs Sheila Webster.

37. HANDING OVER OF NATIONAL STANDARD TO THE NEW NATIONAL STANDARD BEARER

The National Standard was handed by the National Chairman to the winner of the Ashwanden Cup, the National Standard Bearer for the ensuing year, Susan Parke, Cookstown, Northern Ireland District.

38. PRESENTATION OF LIFE VICE-PRESIDENT BY NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

The National Chairman presented Mrs Wendy Bromwich jp with her Life Vice-President’s badge.

Permission was given for the Ballot Papers to be destroyed.

The National Anthem was sung after which the Standard Bearers paraded from the Hall.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE BUSINESS OF CONFERENCE



39. MOTIONS

1. This Conference requests that, notwithstanding Bye-Law 5 b), the Membership Fee shall for one year only from 1 October 2015, be increased by £1.70 to £8.00 with subsequent increase in the fee thereafter to 50p per year.

Proposed: Central Committee

Seconded: Ilford Branch

CARRIED

2. This Conference proposes the consideration of a National Coffee and Cake event, to be held during a certain time in the year, for our Women's Section Benevolent Schemes.

Proposed: Central Committee

Seconded: Cheshire County

CARRIED

3. This Conference requests that Central Committee looks into the possibility of the Annual Conference being held in a venue other than a coastal resort.

Proposed: Penistone Branch

Seconded: York Branch

LOST

4. This Conference requests that Central Committee gives consideration to reimbursement of travel costs for Marshals attending Regional Standard Bearer Competitions' which would be borne by the Counties within that Region.

Proposed: Camborne Branch

Seconded: Pawlett Branch

CARRIED

5. This Conference proposes the consideration of awarding grants, where permanent residency of the family is overseas and not UK based, through the Children's Fund.

Proposed: Central Committee

Seconded: Bewdley Branch

CARRIED

40. AMENDMENTS TO BYE-LAWS

1. Amendment to Bye-Laws 6 a)iii), 7, 8 b)i) and 8 c)

Delete: 'National Treasurer'

Proposed: Central Committee

Seconded: Wiltshire County

CARRIED

2. Amendment to Bye Law 5b i)

Every branch shall forward directly to Head Office a membership fee in respect of each member of the branch. The membership fee shall be increased each year by 50p. One-sixth of the amount received from branches in any county/district by Head Office shall be returned to the relevant county/district for administration purposes provided that the relevant county/district is in compliance with Bye-Law 10 i).

Proposed: Central Committee

Seconded: Northern Ireland District

CARRIED



3. Bye-Law 8b (iii)

Delete last sentence from 'However' and the word 'two' on line 3

Bye-Law now reads:

'Each Region or District member of Central Committee shall serve for a term of 3 consecutive years. This Bye-Law does not prevent a Regional or District Member being elected for further 3 year terms.

In accordance with the timetable below, the terms of office shall commence with the first 3 year term for which the member of Central Committee is now elected.'

Proposed: Worcestershire County

Seconded: Pershore Branch

CARRIED

41. NATIONAL CUP COMPETITION 2013/2014 PRESENTED AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

THE EILEEN EDGAR CUP

Awarded to the County in recognition of the highest average donations raised per member to the National Schemes

WINNER:	Lincolnshire
Certificate of Merit 1:	Northern Ireland
Certificate of Merit 2:	South East Metropolitan

THE OVERTON CUP

Awarded to the Branch in recognition of the highest average donations raised per member to the National Schemes

WINNER:	Louth, Lincolnshire
Certificate of Merit 1:	Norton Canes, South Staffordshire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Drewsteignton, Devon

THE PRINCESS ROYAL CUP

Awarded for the most outstanding work of a County

WINNER:	Durham
Certificate of Merit 1:	Gloucester
(Presented with THE NAPIER CUP)	
Certificate of Merit 2:	Cheshire

THE HAIG CUP – (LARGE BRANCH)

Presented with THE ELIZABETH DAGNAL CUP

Awarded to Branches for efficiency and progress

WINNER:	West Wickham, South East Metropolitan
Certificate of Merit 1	Chatteris, Cambridgeshire
Certificate of Merit 2	Bakewell, Derbyshire



THE HAIG CUP – (MEDIUM BRANCH)

Presented with THE HAIG CUP

Awarded to Branches for efficiency and progress

WINNER:	London Colney, Hertfordshire
Certificate of Merit 1:	Aylsham & District, Norfolk
Certificate of Merit 2:	Bewdley, Worcestershire

THE HAIG CUP – (SMALL BRANCH)

Presented with THE BUCKINGHAM CUP

Awarded to Branches for efficiency and progress

WINNER:	Worcester Park, Surrey
Certificate of Merit 1:	Consett & District, Durham
Certificate of Merit 2:	Wallasey, Cheshire

THE CHAIRMAN'S CUP

Presented with THE CHAIRMAN'S CUP

Awarded to Standard Bearers for outstanding, dedicated service (for those not entering the Ashwanden Competition)

WINNER:	Linda Dopson, Manor Park, North East Metropolitan
Certificate of Merit 1:	Pat Ayres MBE, Kemble & District, Gloucestershire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Janice Baynes, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

THE JELLICOE CUP – (LARGE BRANCH)

Presented with THE LADY HANKINSON CUP

Awarded for an overall increase in Membership

WINNER:	Mundesley & District, Norfolk
Certificate of Merit 1:	Winslow, Buckinghamshire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Culcheth, West Lancashire

THE JELLICOE CUP – (MEDIUM BRANCH)

Presented with THE JELLICOE CUP

Awarded for an overall increase in Membership

WINNER:	Nantwich, Cheshire
Certificate of Merit 1:	Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Peterlee, Durham



THE JELlicOE CUP – (SMALL BRANCH)
Presented with THE LONDONDERRY TROPHY

Awarded for an overall increase in Membership

WINNER:	Consett & District, Durham
Certificate of Merit 1:	Fareham, Hampshire
Certificate of Merit 2:	NO ENTRY

THE SIR BRUNEL COHEN CUP – (LARGE BRANCH)
Presented with THE DENTON CUP

Awarded to the Branch making the greatest effort to the National Schemes

WINNER:	West Wickham, South East Metropolitan
Certificate of Merit 1:	Chatteris, Cambridgeshire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Little Sutton & District, Cheshire

THE SIR BRUNEL COHEN CUP – (MEDIUM BRANCH)
Presented with THE SIR BRUNEL COHEN CUP

Awarded to the Branch making the greatest effort to the National Schemes

WINNER:	Aylesham & District, Norfolk
Certificate of Merit 1:	Bewdley, Worcestershire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Sutton Scotney & District, Hampshire

THE SIR BRUNEL COHEN CUP – (SMALL BRANCH)
Presented with THE MONICA MARSH CUP

Awarded to the Branch making the greatest effort in support of the National Schemes

WINNER:	Worcester Park, Surrey
Certificate of Merit 1:	Wallasey, Cheshire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Wellow & District, Hampshire

THE NATIONAL OFFICER'S CUP (16–30 years)

Awarded for enrolling the most new members under the age of 50 years

NO ENTRIES

THE NATIONAL OFFICERS CUP (over 30 years)
Presented with N.O Cup – with Club

Awarded to individual members for raising the highest amount

WINNER:	Joyce Mitchell, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire
Certificate of Merit 1:	Jackie Taylor, Bewdley, Worcestershire
Certificate of Merit 2:	Lilian Mitchell, Middleton in Teesdale, Durham

**THE RAYMOND CUP**

Awarded to the individual member who has recruited the most new members in the year 2013–14

WINNER:	Loreli Law, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire
Certificate of Merit 1:	Christine Middleton, Peterlee, Durham
Certificate of Merit 2:	Vera Parnaby, Consett & District, Durham

NATIONAL STANDARD BEARER'S COMPETITION 2015

Ashwanden Cup Winner	Susan Parke, Cookstown, Northern Ireland District
Urwick Cup (runner up)	Rachel Perkins, Gloucester City, West Midlands
Third Place	Amanda Bearyman, Chiseldon, Five Counties of the South West

FULL MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO
ALL WOMEN OVER THE AGE OF 16 YEARS.



WE SEEK TO SERVE