

RNLI KELSALL BRANCH

Chairman's Report for the year ended 31st December 2012 Presented at the AGM on 26th February 2013

When I wrote the chairman's branch report last year, I used the phrase "a year of treading water". Although then indicating a wish to hand over the role of chairman to a new hand with energy to promote the branch's fundraising more actively and vigorously, I was persuaded to stay on. As I write now in February 2013 there is rather more encouraging news in that several "recruits" have been enlisted onto the branch committee. Talk of reducing the branch to the level of a supporters' group has, for the present, been discounted and the branch will seek to maintain its independence with guidance and encouragement from our community fundraising manager.

We were aware early on last year that the services of our long standing, much experienced and very hard working Honorary Treasurer would not continue beyond 2012. It was, however, expected that his knowledge and wise counsel might have continued with his presence in committee. Sadly, however, Moss Tennison has found it necessary to retire from his many branch activities which he has dealt with so conscientiously for more than two decades. His gentle humour in committee frequently brought a smile to his colleagues' faces. I know the committee would want me to thank Moss most sincerely for all he has done and achieved for the RNLI Kelsall Branch and to express our very best wishes to him and to Jean, both of whom have been such enthusiastic supporters for so many years.

Not only did Moss maintain the branch accounts, dealing with the duties of treasurer, he also regularly collected from the many lifeboat boxes he had strategically placed in pubs and restaurants locally, acting as box secretary; arranged and managed the annual Kelsall, Tarvin and Tarporley flag day street collections as flag day officer; and for many years found time to organise and run an autumn Xmas market in the village hall. If that were not enough, the branch has benefitted on many occasions from choir concerts which Moss arranged, attracting a considerable local following, helping to promote the RNLI cause.

The branch committee met on four occasions during last year, March 13th, May 2nd, July 18th and October 4th and I am grateful to Jim (Branch Vice Chairman) and Audrey Wraith and to John and Lin Grieveson for hosting those meetings. As I have already mentioned the committee has been strengthened by the arrival of Pat Tyson-Jones, Brian Clark and Gavin Armstrong. We are hopeful that on the retirement of Moss Tennison his duties as Honorary Treasurer will be assumed by Gwyn Jones who has intimated his willingness to assist, particularly with the advent of on line accounting.

With additional "hands on deck" the Kelsall Branch expects to be moving ahead with fundraising for RNLI. The regular box collections and flag day arrangements are in hand and an ambitious Charity Dinner has been booked at Willington Hall on Thursday 25th April 2013 which will be our major event this year. This should be an opportunity to extend the number and become better aware of RNLI supporters in the neighbourhood.

Turning to the results of the branch in 2012, it is pleasing to report that despite our "treading water", it was still possible to achieve a contribution of £2,184 in the absence of any major fundraising event. Our box collections amounting to £1,075 were down 36% on 2011 and the street collections amounting to £716 were also down a similar percentage. That similarity is almost surely coincidental. The main reason for a disappointing street collection in Kelsall can be put down to the misfortune of the most appalling weather on the chosen day when torrential rain encouraged the wise to remain indoors!

An attempt to extend our street collections on Sunday 26th August at Delamere Forest was somewhat disappointing notwithstanding a most gloriously warm afternoon. It seemed that folk could not be easily parted from their loose change on that occasion and only £52 was collected; a small reward for four hours effort. Nevertheless I should like to thank Cathy Peel, Arthur Morgan, Ralph Waldock, Tony Wilson and Sylvia Spencer together with all members of the committee for “doing their turn” on these important flag days.

Although the opportunity to sell cards and souvenirs was restricted in 2012 due to the lack of any events, our Souvenir Secretary, Audrey Wraith, was able to achieve increased sales and profit - a splendid performance! We are grateful to her and to Winsors Fruit Farm for its on-going support in providing a venue for promoting the sale of Christmas cards. For the year sales of £831 were up 20% on 2011 and the profit of £490 credited to the branch by RNLI was up 16%. I congratulate Audrey on another very successful year and I thank her for her continuing support as Souvenir Secretary and member of the committee.

The branch committee and friends concluded the year with a well-attended and most convivial Christmas lunch held on Tuesday 11th December at Willington Hall when a party of eighteen participated. This most enjoyable occasion had been arranged for us by Pat Tyson-Jones. I am sure her next RNLI event at Willington Hall will be equally successful but I thank her now for making all the arrangements for the Xmas function.

The purpose of the branch is of course not only to raise funds but to help lift the profile of RNLI in the community so that potential benefactors, who may indeed not be known supporters, should be encouraged to donate direct to RNLI by legacy or otherwise.

A big THANK YOU once again to all who have contributed their time or funds or both to benefit the Kelsall branch and thus the RNLI in 2012 and an especially grateful acknowledgement for all the work so capably done by our Honorary Secretary, Lin Grieveson, in administering the meetings and taking and distributing the minutes.

Finally, I should acknowledge the support we have received from Deborah Ferns our Community Fundraising manager, who attended our committee on July 18th and assisted in guiding us ahead. We look forward to a continuing working relationship with her and her team and hope to see her in Kelsall during the coming year.

Edward Baskerville
Chairman

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