

The Royal Engineers Association

(Registered under the Charities Act 1992)

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



All correspondence to:

The Controller
RE Association
Brompton Bks
CHATHAM
Kent
ME4 4UG

Telephone: 01634 822407
Fax: 01634 822394
Website: www.reahq.org.uk
Email: info@reahq.org.uk

All Management Committee Members
All Group Secretaries
All Branch Secretaries
Controller REA
Corps Treasurer

04 August 2009

MINUTES OF THE 111th MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD IN 0402 HISTORIC ROOM 24, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, MAIN BUILDING, LONDON, ON MONDAY 20th JULY 2009

PRESENT

Maj Gen J D Moore-Bick CBE DL
Col D Caulfield
WO1 (RSM) J Blaylock
WO1 (RSM) M Stewart
Lt Col (Retd) WJH Clark
Mr H Evans
Mr T Mitchley
Mr J R V Mason
Mr E Lowbridge
Mr E Briggs
Mr R Fenn
Mr B Prosser
Mr J Bell
Mr G Littleford

Chairman
Regimental Colonel
21 Engr Regt
3 RSME Regt
Central Southern Group
Chairman, Families Reunion Committee
East Anglia Group
South West Group
North Midlands Group
London Group
South East Group
North East Group
Scotland & NI Group
South Midlands Group

IN ATTENDANCE

Lt Col J R McLennan
Lt Col N Jordan

Controller REA
D Con REA and Secretary

APOLOGIES

Maj B Ironton RE
Lt Col J Townsley
Lt Col R Murfin TD DL
Maj (Retd) B Henderson
WO1 (RSM) M Yates
Mr B Baxter

Comdt RETC Wyke Regis
Corps Treasurer
Reserve Army
South Wales Group
1 RSME Regt
North West Group

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present especially those who had come from afar. For the benefit of the new members, he asked those around the table to introduce themselves.

2. The Chairman noted that apologies had been received from those listed above. He welcomed the following new members to the Committee:

- WO1 (RSM) J Blaylock – 21 Engr Regt
- Mr H Evans - Chairman, Families Reunion Committee

ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 110th MEETING

3. The Committee accepted that the Minutes of the 110th Meeting were a true record of the proceedings.

4. Proposed: Bob Prosser (North East Gp). Seconded: Eddie Briggs (London Gp)

5. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 110th MEETING

6. There were no matter arising from the 110th meeting.

ITEM 3 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE

7. The Controller presented the Benevolence Report for the 6-month period ending 30th June 2009. The report is at Annex A.

8. The Controller said that the average cost of cases for 2008 was £425 each.

9. Cttee members were reminded that there was an open invitation for branch and units to send observers to the Benevolence Cttee meetings. A good attendance by observers ensured that the benevolence work of the REA was brought to the attention of the serving Corps.

10. The Controller gave an update on the Kitchener Scholarships and said that the fund was worth about £330k. The Regt Col said that each year about £20k to £25k can be spent. The Chairman asked if there was a queue for assistance from this fund, the Controller said there was not and that the fund would manage to support about 6 children at once. The Regt Col said that even if the Kitchener Scholarships fund was not available to an eligible person, there were many other schools offering similar places to eligible persons.

11. The Chairman wondered if the RSMs present knew about the Kitchener Scholarships Fund; they said they did not. The Chairman thought it would be useful if some advertising was put in place – say 3 or 4 lines in the Sapper Magazine about the Kitchener Scholarships Fund.

12. The Corps Memorial Book (CMB) continues to attract interest. But the Regt Col suggested that there were still a large number of soldiers still unaware of the CMB and that the message would be best spread through the RSM chain. Currently the Book contains about 1000 dedications. Applications for dedications to former members of the Corps can be made by completing the online Form. The Memorial Book can be reached from the REA website by choosing ‘Corps Memorial Book’ under the ‘In Memoriam’ tab or by directly entering <http://www.reahq.org.uk/index.php/in-memoriam>

13. The Controller said that because of the current financial turmoil and the increase in our dependencies, pressures on REA benevolence would be increased. He confirmed that there was an increase in the number of benevolence applicants citing debt as a factor.

14. The Benevolence Report was accepted.

ITEM 4 - TO NOTE THE REGIMENTAL COLONELS REPORT ON THE CORPS

15. The Regt Col presented his report. The report is at Annex B.

16. There was an amendment to Corps Sporting achievements. The Corps is now the Inter-Corps Champions at Rugby League and at Golf.

17. The Regt Col’s report was accepted.

ITEM 5 - TO NOTE THE REPORT FROM THE FAMILIES EVENTS COMMITTEE

18. Harold Evans presented the Families Events Committee report. The report is at Annex C.

19. He explained the committee situation within the Families Events Organisation and said that he had agreed to stand in as a 'caretaker' National Events Organiser until a more permanent replacement could be found.

20. He said that currently he is only able to attract about 200 attendees to the Spring Reunions; he added that the holiday centres were looking for 300+ to ensure exclusivity. He was not able to confirm the 2011 venue because he was unsure of how many would attend the Mundesley reunion in 2010. He further added that numerically and financially he saw little future for the Families Events beyond 2012.

21. The Chairman asked what activities were unavailable if exclusivity was not achieved. Harold Evans said that there would be an effect on things like the Gala Dinner, some raffles and the final evening's entertainment function though no detail was provided.

22. Eddie Briggs (London Gp) asked if there was any progress in coaching people from Scotland to the Reunions. Harold Evans explained that the 'centres' were very reluctant to pay the high price to transport people from Scotland; distance was the real problem.

23. John Bell (Scotland & NI Gp) said that there were plenty of cheap travel schemes to get people from Scotland to London – all that was needed was transport from London to the 'centres'. The Controller thought this should be followed up as a way forward.

24. Eddie Briggs (London Gp) said that the REME Association holds shorter reunions (long weekends) at large hotels and resorts. These seem to be well supported.

25. Trevor Mitchley (East Anglia Gp) suggested that joining forces with other likeminded ex-service organisations might be a way forward. There was some agreement with this idea.

26. Bob Prosser (North East Gp) said that families remaining behind when their husbands were on operations might like to attend the Families Event. Trevor Mitchley (East Anglia) said that many of the venues did not allow children. Harold Evans said that unless exclusivity was achieved, children could not attend Families Events.

27. The Chairman said he thought that if the REA could not achieve exclusivity and to ensure the continuation of Families Events, then other Associations should be sounded out as partners in the enterprise. Harold Evans remarked that if other Associations were to be involved, he would need to reconsider his position as 'caretaker' National Events Organiser because of the potential work load.

28. The Families Events Committee Report was accepted.

ITEM 6 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE RECRUITING COMMITTEE

29. The D Con presented the report which is at Annex D. He remarked on the increase of new Life Members over the last 12 months. This reverses a four year decline in Life Membership numbers.

30. The Recruiting Committee Report was accepted.

ITEM 7 – TO COMMENT ON THE 2010 BUDGET

31. There was some discussion on the budget, in particular the fact that Serials 9 through 16 did not show any increase for future years. The Chairman was concerned that where there were static figures, we were in effect reducing our contributions and not setting a realistic budget.

32. The Controller said he would check with the Corps Treasurer at the next Finance Meeting to determine the percentage increase to allow for inflation.

33. The Chairman said that budget amounts should be reviewed constantly – he said we should maintain the level of giving by keeping our contributions at a proper level accounting for inflation.

34. The Controller said he would pass on these comments to the Finance Cttee and Council.

ITEM 8 - BRANCH FINANCIAL SUMMARIES

35. The Controller said that Branch Financial Summaries submitted for the FY 2008 were the best since they were introduced in 2004. He offered a vote of thanks to all Groups and Branches who contributed to this success. He added that there were still some ‘wayward’ branches and hoped that future years would continue to show an improvement.

ITEM 9 – TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE AGENDA FOR THE 2009 AGM

36. The Committee considered the AGM Agenda and approved the draft to Council.

ITEM 10 – RIPON WEEKEND 2010 AND BEYOND

37. The D Con advised that the Ripon Branch had declined to run future Ripon Weekend (RWE) events. This did not mean that there would not be future RWE’s and Groups and Branches should be made aware of this.

38. WO1 (RSM) J Blaylock (21 Engr Regt) advised the meeting that a Committee made up of representatives of the North East Group and Chaired by Mr Bill Halloran would be planning and

running future RWE in conjunction with 21 Engr Regt. A meeting of this Cttee with CO and RSM 21 Engr Regt was due to take place on 04 August; this meeting would develop an outline plan for RWE 2010.

39. The D Con said that the title of the event should remain as the 'Ripon Weekend' and not be changed. The Controller agreed saying that it was a National Event and to avoid any confusion its long held identity should remain. Members of the Management Cttee agreed.

ITEM 11 - REA CENTENARY 2012

40. The Controller reminded members that in 2012 the REA would be 100 years old and offered some suggestions on how to recognise or celebrate this momentous occasion. Suggestions included Group based 'receptions' in local areas to raise the profile of the REA in that area, a larger turnout for the Corps Memorial weekend with all REA Standards and a larger REA contingent, a commemorative piece of silver and a drumhead service at the NMA followed by a reception similar to the opening ceremony of the Corps Memorial in May 2007.

41. Lt Col (Retd) W Clark (Central Southern Gp) suggested that the RBL be informed of the anniversary with a view to including something about it at the 2012 Festival of Remembrance. The Chairman thought this a very good idea.

42. The Chairman asked how much funding would be available for celebrating the centenary. The Controller said that he did not have an amount in mind, but a guideline would be the opening ceremony of the Corps Memorial at the NMA that cost ca £10K. This whole amount was found from a Lottery Grant.

43. WO1 (RSM) M Stewart (3 RSME Regt) suggested that as Brompton Bks was the home of the Corps it would make sense to use the Corps Memorial weekend as the catalyst for a really big event to celebrate the REA Centenary. There was a great deal of support for this idea.

44. Trevor Mitchley (East Anglia) asked if there was an 'Open Day' during the Corps Memorial weekend in the year of the Centenary. The Regt Col agreed that this was a good point and would give a 'heads-up' to the Comdt.

45. The Controller agreed to take some options forward in terms of detail and costs.

Action: Controller

ITEM 12 - BRANCH MATTERS

46. Distribution of Papers to Branch AGM Delegates. The Controller said that in accordance

with Rule 8.09, Branch Secretaries were sent copies of the Financial Statements in May; they were reminded again in the July HQ Circular that Branch AGM delegates are required to have sight of the Statements. Gp Cttee members were requested to ensure Branches were made aware of the need for AGM delegates to have sight of the papers.

47. Corps Memorial at the NMA. Ted Lowbridge (North Midlands Gp) said that he thought the Corps Memorial was lacking in some way, he said he thought it needed more 'wow' factor to get more people to visit it. The Chairman asked those assembled for their opinions. The D Con did not agree that the Memorial needed more 'wow' factor. He said the Memorial was a place for quiet contemplation; it was not in competition with other memorials within the NMA for the greatest number of visits. There was some support for this.

48. After some discussion there was general agreement with the Chairman's statement that the Memorial should be allowed several years to 'bed in' and the topic revisited in some years to come.

ITEM 13 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

49. Ray Fenn (South East Gp) said that at the last SE Gp meeting the matter of MMA rates was raised. He said that it was said that the RBL were paying 40 pence per mile and asked if there should be a change to the REA rate. The D Con replied that the rate paid by the REA reflects that paid by the MOD/Civil Service in agreement with the Charity Trustees; this was currently 25 pence per mile.

50. Ted Lowbridge (North Midlands Gp) asked if the benches donated by the REA to Selly Oak and Hedley Court were yet in place.

51. The Regt Col advised that the benches had not been delivered; this was brought to his attention during a recent visit to the hospital. He had made enquiries and found that the benches were held in storage by 33 Engr Regt. During discussions with the QM 33 Engr Regt it was established that 10 benches were too many to be located at Selly Oak and Hedley Court; there being insufficient room. He suggested sending 3 of the benches to Combat Stress Homes. The Cttee approved the idea in principle and recommended the relocation to Council.

Action: Council

52. The Controller offered a vote of thanks to Graham Littleford (South Midlands Gp) for the work he did in mobilizing attendance of REA members and Standard Bearers at Spr Quinsey's funeral.

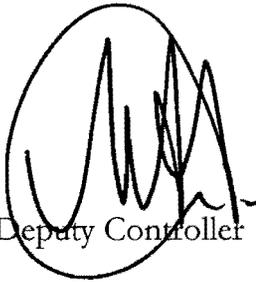
53. Trevor Mitchley (East Anglia Gp) asked if anyone knew how the National Standard Bearer Albert Fuller was progressing. The D Con advised that for some time Albert had been making

good progress but about a month ago had suffered a set back and was back in hospital. His wife Pat provides HQ REA with frequent updates on his health and to date he has made good progress and is expected to be released from hospital in the very near future.

ITEM 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

54. The date of the next meeting is planned for 28th January 2010. The exact location within MOD Main Building will be notified when known.

04 August 2009



Deputy Controller

Minutes Approved

Date

Chairman

Benevolence Report for 111th Meeting of the REA Management Committee

1. **Trends.** The trend over the first period of 2009 is about 10% up at 556 compared with the same half-year period as last year at 499. We are handling more cases for the younger family and many of these are because of debt and financial difficulties.

2. Benevolence Cases 2003 - 2009

Annual Totals	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
	Jan-Jun	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec
Requests	556	984	1048	936	910	878	897
Grants	548	975	1026	919	886	855	877

3. **Cost of Benevolence 2009** The net costs of REA benevolence grants for 2009 was about £600K for benevolence cases together with weekly allowances, Christmas grants and grants to other charities including SSAFA Forces Help, Combat Stress and the ABF.

4. **REA Branch Observers.** Observers are most welcome to visit an REA Benevolence Meeting in London to see how the business of making financial grants is carried out on behalf of the Corps. Controller REA invites Branches to attend with the aim of those observers reporting back to their Branch of what they have seen and to pass the word around that we are there to help.

5. **Christmas Cards.** Christmas cards and a modest Christmas box are sent out from HQ REA to over eight hundred Members or their widows and to those being treated for Combat Stress. We receive many letters of appreciation for this thought and consideration and although it creates a heavy workload on the REA Staff to complete this task on behalf of the REA as a whole it is most rewarding to see that the gesture is appreciated.

6. **Grants to Other Charities.** REA Council have approved a grants to other Service charities who maybe involved in the care and benevolent work for our Sappers and their families. The ABF received £35,000 (£5K for the ABF Current Operations Fund), SSAFA Forces Help received £5,000 and Combat Stress received £7,500 for their excellent work. In addition this year the REA Trustees approved a grant of £2.5K to Veterans Aid, a small charity at the coal-face of those rough-sleepers in London. All these charities act as our eyes & ears helping the wider services family who have fallen on hard times and look after some of the many services facilities where our Sappers mat frequent.

7. **Kitchener Scholarship.** The REA Council have accepted the responsibilities of running the Kitchener Scholarship on behalf of the Corps and have delegated the day-to-day running of the fund to the REA Benevolence Committee. At present the Fund is looking after four children of the Corps.

8. **Corps Memorial Book.** The REA website, in the In Memoriam section there is a link to the Corps Memorial Book with names of those who died over the past few months. It is a new initiative and one that we hope will be used and populated by friends and families to commemorate the lives of those Sappers who have died whilst on or off duty.

CORPS REPORT

7 July 2009

Operations and Commitments

- Iraq – 35 Engr Regt Gp now recovered to Germany. Elms of 62 Wks Gp and 45 Fd Sp Sqn remain in Kuwait. CO 62 Wks Gp is Joint Force Engineer.
- Afghanistan – 38 Engr Regt Gp with 32 HQ and Sp Sqn, 11 and 25 Fd Sqns, 33 Armd Engr Sqn and elms of 66 Wks Gp and 33 Engr Regt (EOD) as C-IED TF(-). They will be replaced by 28 Engr Regt Gp in Sep 09. There is currently an Op BAM (maintenance and winterisation) surge (65 Fd Sp Sqn) and there will be an uplift to the 3rd CS Sqn, an extra ½ STRE and a bolstered Resources Node.
- RE TA continues to support above with a troop, plus specialist individuals.
- Public Duties – 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt) delivered Public Duties in support of HQ LONDON District from Feb – Apr 09.

Structures

- RSME P4 – major establishment changes to HQ RSME, Cbt and Constr Engr Schs (reduction of mil posts of approx 300 once fully implemented).
- Asst RCMOs being established across the Corps.

Campaign Footing:

- Re-role 61 Fd Sp Sqn RE to EOD by HERRICK 13 to sustain C-IED TF.
- Re-structure of 33 Engr Regt.
- Re-role of RHQ 101 Engr Regt (V) to a Hybrid Regular/Reserve RHQ to command Regular & TA EOD Sqns and provide a deployable C-IED TF HQ by HERRICK 14.
- Deliver an eighth STRE (Wks) by Op HERRICK 14 by re-roling 1x STRE (Fuels) and by re-aligning 5 specialist posts from Regional Forces/Defence Estates.

Future Army Structures (Next Steps):

- Our FAS(NS) proposition sees a Corps of a similar size, albeit with a modest uplift, but with an even more manoeuvre brigade focused shape. It proposes rebalancing of Force and Engineer Logistic Support to deliver increased Battlefield (Bde Engr Regts), EOD and search, Infra and Geo Sp capability. To achieve this it proposes reductions in our existing GS Engr Regt and Fd Sp Sqn capabilities. The proposition includes a greater integration of RE TA within Regular units.
- RE TA – Continues to grow (124 Sqn (71 Regt) formed on 1 Apr 09) but 129 Sqn (73 Regt) delayed until basing decision resolved.

People

- Recruiting – Officer recruiting is 47% (36 recruited against quota of 77) and soldier recruiting at 59% (827 against tgt of 1406) for 09/10.

Manning:

- Reg Soldier = 94.7% (excl QGE), 0.6% female, 4.3% Foreign and Commonwealth.
- Reg Officer = 102.4% (excl QGE), 7.2% female.
- QGE = 105%.
- TA Soldier¹ = 61%.
- TA Officer¹ = 71%.

¹ As at Apr 09.

- Retention – Corps' 5 year average outflow of 7.2%. Overall strength is improving due to better recruitment, reduced voluntary outflow, the effect of financial incentives and the current economic environment.

Operational and Gallantry Awards:

- Operational – OBE x 1, MC x 2, QGM x 1, QCB x 3, MiD x 7, QCVS x 7.
- Queen's Birthday/New Year – KCB x 1, OBE x 2, MBE x 7.

Equipment

- TROJAN and TITAN continues to progress towards full operating capability and initial operating capability respectively. Outflow of final build standard eqpt complete by mid 2011.
- TERRIER trials progress on 4 development vehicles. ISD is Apr 2013.
- C Veh PFI Equipment Replacement and Refurbishment Programme progresses well.
- Deployable Engineer Workshop fielded.
- VALLON Improved Hand Held Metal Detector fielded.
- Route Proving and Clearance UOR (TALISMAN) for Afghanistan funded with aspiration to deliver in 2010.
- From HERRICK 11 (Oct 09), RE CMD operators will be trained and equipped to deal with IEDs *in extremis*.

Training

- RSME P4 – HOLDFAST assumed responsibility for training on 5 Jan 09 and during this early period is progressing well with output being maintained.

International

- French EinC and Pakistani Director General Engineers hosted. US Engineer Force Conference attended.

Sport

- Rugby Union - The Corps have retained for the third consecutive year, the Army Inter-Corps championship, the first time that this has been achieved in Army Rugby. Congratulations are due to Cpl Hughes, currently ERLS, who received his 28th cap this year and thus became the highest capped player in Army rugby history. The Corps were comfortable winners against the Gunners.
- Skiing – 28 Engr Regt and 21 Engr Regt were 2nd and 4th respectively on Princess Marina Cup. Ladies Nordic runners up. A further 5 sappers have been selected for the GB development squad.
- Bobsleigh – 299 Para Sqn(V) were Army Novice runners up.
- Canoeing – Devizes to Westminster – Services Trophy Champions and runners-up in the Open competition (to Richmond Canoe Club).
- Hockey – Inter-Corps, Army Major and Minor Unit Champions. The Veterans team were runners-up.
- Boxing – ABA Fly-Weight Champion.
- Judo – 1 selected for Combined Services team in the National championships.
- Cricket – Strong representation in the Army team that recently toured Barbados.
- Windsurfing – Forces Individual Champion.
- Swimming & Water Polo – Army Men's Team Champions and the Ladies runners-up. Ladies Inter-Corps Water Polo Champions.
- Athletics – Army individual 400m hurdles, long jump and combined services representation.

Future

Army:

- Future Army Structures (Next Steps).
- Reserves Review: LF Implementation. CRF – 'we must change'.
- PR 9.5/10.

Corps:

- Capability Review complete. Development Agenda being actioned.
- Development of the RSME under P4.
- Making training more relevant.

Concerns

- Manning qualities if not quantities.
- Maintaining the Technical/Combat balance.
- Delivering the Military Stabilisation Support Group.
- Manoeuvre support core equipment in the round in the FRES era.
- Competent Army Authority and Inspectorate responsibilities (preserving reputation).

ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION FAMILIES EVENTS ORGANISATION.

REPORT TO THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY 20th JULY 2009.

Mill Rythe Holiday Village
Spring Reunion 8 to 15th May 2009.

I must inform the Committee that despite being re-elected at our AGM held on Thursday 14th May that Mr Coward has seen fit to stand down as Chairman/National Organiser, following a loss of confidence of the Stewards Committee. I have agreed to stand in as a caretaker National Organiser, until such time as a more permanent replacement can be found.

As such, I have taken control of the arrangements for future reunions and will do my utmost to ensure continued success.

Mr Roger Prince was re-elected as Treasurer and Mr J Clarke and Mr J Staddon scrutineers (Taunton Branch) and I submit their names for Management Committee approval.

180 members, families and friends enjoyed an excellent week, with good accommodation, three excellent meals a day and good entertainment. Coach trips organised by Frank Merrett were varied and enjoyed by all.

We enjoyed a visit from our Controllor and his good lady Angela who were our Guests of Honour at our Gala Dinner.

Our Remembrance Service on the Sunday was conducted by the Reverend Canon John Harwood and was well attended.

MUNDESLEY HOLIDAY VILLAGE.
SPRING REUNION 14th to 21st May 2010.

Negotiations for this reunion had already been partly put in hand and I have arranged a meeting for 15th July 2009 with the General Manager. I hope to dot all the i's and cross all the t's at this meeting. Frank Merrett our Coach Master is already looking at possible excursions.

SOUTH DOWN HOLIDAY VILLAGE.
SPRING REUNION 20th to 27th May 2011.

I have made provisional booking for this centre and will arrange a meeting with the General Manager on a date to be agreed in the near future.

I would sound a note of warning ref: future reunions. Our numbers are dwindling and it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain exclusivity at any venues. We are reduced to only three venues able and willing to host our reunions as such. Financially and numerically I can see little future for Family Events beyond 2012.

Harold Evans
President and National Organiser.

RECRUITING COMMITTEE REPORT
FOR THE MEETING OF
THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2009

REA AWARENESS TRAINING

1. Since the last report, 1102 Phase 2 recruits, have received REA Awareness Training and been given the 'Welcome Pack'.
2. Awareness presentations have continued to be given to all 1 RSME Command Courses either by the Controller REA or where he was unable to attend a member of the course Permanent Staff have stood in for him.

RECRUITING INITIATIVES

3. Recruiting Poster.
 - a. The A3 Recruiting Poster, aimed at the serving soldier, was issued to all major and minor units and an A4 version was published in the Sapper magazine on substantially thicker paper and bound into the magazine so that the magazine would fall open at the page of the poster.
 - b. The committee has agreed to continue with the Recruiting Poster campaign and the Sapper magazine insert over the next year.

RECRUITING STATISTICS

4. During the period of this report the number of new Life Members recruited has been 475 throughout all the REA Groups. This reverses the downward trend which had been a feature of the previous four years.

Peter Lund.

Peter Lund
Chairman
Recruiting Committee

15th July 2009