



THE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2018

BR0753



Editor - Malcolm Page

01491 578712

Malcolm.page55@btinternet.com

Assistant Editor

Anne Evans

01491 578238

2anne.evans@sky.com

Distribution

Mollie Jeffrey

Mobile: 07768 851615

Mollie@billjeffrey.com

Contributors

Editorial

Malcolm Page

News

John Green

Membership Secretary

Mollie Jeffrey

Poppy Appeal

Annie Arscott

Community Support

Nick Launders

Branch Secretary

Colin Davies

Website :

www.rbl-henley.org



RBL Branch Membership Secretary,
Mollie Jeffrey, bravely raising funds for
the Poppy Appeal

"The views on the way down were tremendous and
my loyal supporters gave me a round of applause
when I staggered back to them on terra firma - my
favourite place, no question"



Dates for Your Diary

**Meetings are held on 3rd Monday of the month
unless otherwise advised.**

Venue – The Christ Church Centre

Talk 11.30 (please be seated by 11.20) Lunch 12 for 12.30

Please book for lunch by the Thursday before by email to

Martin Goodier on martin.goodier@gargery.net or phone 0118 972 3118

Summer Meeting and talks 2018

15 January - Peter Blaker 'The role of 1st Green Jackets'

(our county regiment) in suppressing the Brunei Rebellion December 1962'

19 February- John Green - Report from the County Conference

**19 March - Dr Noel Snell - 'A Brief History of Biowarfare
& Bioterrorism'**

16 April - David Lees - 'Resistance in the French Alps'

**21 May - Gemma Wise - Community fundraiser for Sue Ryder in
Nettlebed**

18 June - Michaela Clarke - Editor of The Henley Herald

16 July - Dr Jack Ogden FSA FGA -
'All the glitters is not old - detecting fakes of historic jewellery'
Jack Ogden is an archaeologist and historian who focuses on the development of jeweller materials and technology with a special interest in forgery detection, a field in which he is an acknowledged authority. He lives in Henley with his partner Sara Abey, piles of books and a banjo!

**20 August - Major (Retd) Carlo Sisi -'Junior soldier to Regimental
Quartermaster'**

**18 Sep - Capt Kamran Irani -SERV OBN - Service by Emergency Rider
Volunteers - Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, and
Northamptonshire**

They provide an out of hours rapid response service to the NHS hospitals in their region. delivering urgent blood, blood products, medical supplies, medical equipment, and human donor milk, during the times when other transport options to the NHS in their region may be limited, such as every night, weekends, and public holidays. They provide their service using a fleet of liveried motorcycles.

15 October - John Green 'Final Letters from the Front'

Poppy Appeal Fundraising Report - Skydive



Dear Friends/Very Kind Sponsors including Anonymous (because I don't know who you are!)

Sorry if this is repeating what you already know, but I did promise some of you a report and must be certain that I've thanked each and every one of you for supporting me with such great generosity and such encouragement for my skydive last Tuesday.

It was an overwhelming experience, apologies to those of you who've already done it with a lot less fuss, but it really did seem a huge thing to me even though I felt pretty calm beforehand. One of my friends asked me why I was at all frightened if I wasn't worried about the parachute opening (I wasn't) and didn't think I was going to meet my Maker (I didn't) and I can't really answer that.



It just is a pretty strange thing to be hanging outside a plane at 14,000' waiting to be shoved out and whoosh, I've gone. It took 12 hours for my ears to un-pop and 24 hours to stop shaking!

The views on the way down were tremendous and my loyal supporters gave me a round of applause when I staggered

back to them on terra firma (my favourite place, no question).

Stan wrapped me in the Royal British Legion flag supplied by our wonderful chairman John, can you believe my dear sister gave me the only trophy I've ever won in my whole life, and Carlo who got me into all this with his extraordinary enthusiasm and bravery had even given me one of his precious Paratrooper wings badges for good luck.

It has been one of the highlights of my life and so once again – a HUGE thank you for your donation to the Royal British Legion which I can't tell you how much I appreciate.

The fantastic total including Gift Aid is over £3,000!!



'An Artist's War' - Henley Literary Festival

Phyllida Shaw, author of the recent publication 'AN ARTIST'S WAR, The Art and Letter of Alice and Morris Meredith Williams' will be speaking about the book at the Henley Literary Festival on Tuesday, 2 October at 4.30 pm. Venue as yet unknown.



Of Local Interest

Morris Meredith Williams designed five of the stained glass windows in 'All Saints' Church Rotherfield Peppard.

His father was Rector of Rotherfield Peppard in the final decade of the 19th century. His sister, Phyllis, was churchwarden in the 1960s.

WHEN the First World War broke out, Morris Meredith Williams was living in Edinburgh with his wife Alice, a sculptor, and earning his living from book illustration and teaching.

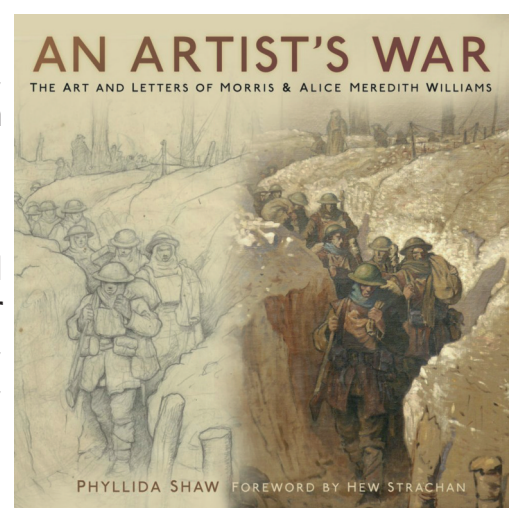
A short man, his attempt to join the army in 1914 failed, but six months later he was accepted by the 17th Battalion, The Welsh Regiment, the first Bantam battalion to be raised in Wales. From June 1916, he spent ten months in and out of the trenches of the Western Front near Loos, Arras and the Somme, later mapping enemy positions from aerial reconnaissance shots with the Heavy Artillery.

In 1918 he joined the Royal Engineers' camouflage unit at Wimereux. After the peace, he was among a handful of artists kept back to make paintings for the official record and toured the shattered landscape in an old ambulance car.

Never without a sketchbook and pencils in his pocket, he drew at every opportunity, producing an extraordinary record of his surroundings.

After the war some of the sketches became oil paintings while others inspired a series of war memorials in bronze, stone, wood and stained glass, most notably for the Scottish National War Memorial, on which he and Alice worked together.

In this stunning book, the Meredith Williams' art is displayed in fine style, ranging from the touching and heartfelt to the most brutal, stark images of the waste and loss of war.





Seventy-Four years ago, between April and June 1944, the seemingly irresistible Japanese onslaught up through Burma to the threshold of India was brought to a halt. In the wooded hills and ridges around the town of Kohima, in Nagaland in North East India, a force of British and Indian troops, initially one brigade strong, but built up gradually to a strength of two divisions plus two independent brigades, first held the advancing Japanese force, a division strong, and then sent it packing. It was the turning point of the war in the East. Had the Japanese been able to penetrate further into India and up the main road

to Dimapur, which was the railhead and supply base for all the British forces, the way into India would have lain open.

At the beginning of April this year, as the culmination of a wonderful journey up the Brahmaputra in a riverboat, wondrously crewed and served, I went to Kohima. What was meant to be a six-hour road journey to get there, after leaving the boat, took nine tiring hours but it was worth the trouble. Being there brought the battle to life.

Over the past seventy years the town has been built up and extended in a higgledy-piggledy fashion with little architectural merit and less attractiveness. Even the cathedral, for this is very much a Christian enclave in Hindu India, is ugly. But the feeling of awe and remembrance remains and the welcome of the local people was as warm as the weather was refreshingly cool.

Every now and then the visitor comes upon a memorial to the men of a British regiment. I remember particularly one to the men of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, tucked away quietly but neatly in a back garden and well tended. There were others. And in the local museum are photographs and relics which take the visitor back in time.

The crowning glory though is the Kohima Memorial and war cemetery itself, on the hillside. Here are buried some four thousand allied troops. In the middle of the area is marked out the boundaries of the District Officer's tennis court, below his bungalow, where one end was occupied by the Japanese and the other by the British in brutal close-range combat. Nearby is a British tank, still resting where it stopped in 1944. And on the rough stone obelisk at the head of the cemetery is carved that modern version of 'Simonides's epitaph at Thermopylae', a version which all of us know so well: *'When you go home tell them of us and say: For your tomorrow we gave our today.'*



As a prelude, or perhaps a footnote, to this visit: in Delhi, before flying off to Guwahati to embark on the Brahmaputra boat I, and a lady also with regimental connections and her husband, was entertained to a wonderful dinner in the Gymkhana Club in Delhi by some retired officers, and their wives, of the Central India Horse which both my great-grandfather and my great-uncle had commanded. One of the Indian officers, known to me, had journeyed for seven hours in a train in order to meet me again. It was heartwarming. The links remain strong.

Henley-on-Thames May Fayre 2018



John Green, Branch Chairman,
Mollie Jeffrey, Membership Secretary
& Major (Retd) Carlo Sisi.

The Branch had a stand at the May Fayre set out with information about the branch, items for sale - including John Green's home made condiments - and the current Newsletters and collection box.

They received a lot of interest and potential new members, and raised around £200 for the Poppy Appeal.

Retiring after 97 years collecting for the Poppy Appeal

A former nurse is to retire from selling poppies after 97 years collecting for the Royal British Legion.



Rosemary Powell, 103, first helped her mother to sell poppies on Twickenham Bridge, in Southwest London for the first Poppy Appeal. She was 6 years old and as been selling poppies ever since. In 1921, her father was shot and three of her uncles and a brother died in the First World War and her first fiancé and a brother died in the Second World War. "The Appeal has always been an important cause for me" said Mrs Powell..

Mrs Powells efforts have been phenomenal and the Legion is proud to share her story

She remembers "It just so happened that we lived down the road from where the poppies were made [in Petersham, Richmond]. We became aware that that was happening locally.

It was easy to get them.

"I remember collecting on Twickenham Bridge with my mother. They were so popular that we ran out in no time".

"My mother was very good at making things with paper and she left me to sell the last few while she nipped over to this sort of general flower shop not far from the bridge to buy some crepe paper to make her own poppies for us to sell.

"She made these very simple little poppies and we soon sold out again. It was the very first one so it really caught the public's attention."

However, Rosemary, who now lives in a nursing home in Chiswick, London, is planning to retire from collecting after this year's appeal.

Announcing her retirement, Rosemary said: "I sold poppies last year – maybe not as enthusiastically as previous years – but this year will probably be my last year of selling. I'm getting old now.

If you would like to know more about becoming a volunteer please visit the web address [here for further information.](https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/why-volunteer/)

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/why-volunteer/>

Henley - Squadron 447 Training Corps



John Green was invited by Flight Lieutenant Tim Keating to represent the RBL at the annual inspection parade of 447 (Squadron Henley-on-Thames) Air Training Corps on 21 May.

" I was very impressed by the high standard of dress and bearing of the cadets as well as their enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment at being members of the Corps."



He was given the opportunity to address the parade and thanked them for their invaluable help with the Poppy Appeal and to say how much the Branch valued their affiliation,

Commemoration Events 2014 - 2018



BELGIUM

5-9 August - Great Pilgrimage 90 - Ypres,

The Royal British Legion is recreating its 1928 pilgrimage to World War One battlefields. See further details through the link from www.rbl-henley.co.uk

Our Chairman, John Green, will represent our Branch at this momentous event, and will be accompanied by his grandson Edward wearing his great-grandfather's medals.



HENLEY

10 November - Remembrance Concert 1914 - 1918

A concert will be held in St Mary's Church Henley on Thames, in aid of the RBL Poppy Appeal

'To the memory of the fallen and the future of the living'



HENLEY

11 November Remembrance Sunday

A Remembrance Parade and service will take place in Falaise Square, Henley town centre at 11 am

NB Notification of future events planned in Henley to commemorate the end of ww1 will be posted in the Autumn Newsletter.