



# THE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021



BR0753

## TELLING OUR STORY

### THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CENTENARY

**Editor**  
Anne Evans  
01491 578238  
zanne.evans@sky.com

**Sub-Editor & Distribution**  
Mollie Jeffrey  
Mobile: 07768 851615  
Mollie@billjeffrey.com

**Contributing Editor**  
Colour Serjeant Tallulah Scott

**Branch Secretary**  
Helen Walsh  
01491 638885  
helentwalsh2014@gmail.com

**Membership Secretary**  
Mollie Jeffrey  
Mobile: 07768 851615  
Mollie@billjeffrey.com

**Speaker Coordinator**  
Sara Abey  
henley@saraabey.com

**Poppy Appeal**  
Annie Arscott

**Community Support**  
Nick Launders  
07711 268924  
Nicklaunders@gmail.com

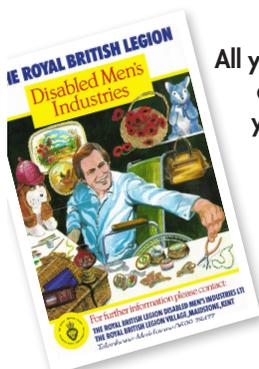
**Website**  
www.rbl-henley.org



John Green with his grandson Edward Bloomer taking part in the Great Pilgrimage to Ypres (Wed 8th August 2018) to mark the 100th anniversary of the British Legions first great pilgrimage to the Menin Gate Ypres in 1928.

To celebrate our centenary year, we want to bring together the incredible work that has been done in our local communities through the last 100 years in an online showcase.

We are looking for artefacts and stories from across the Legion that highlight what we have achieved in this time and the amazing people involved. It could be the story of your branch, a successful campaign, an inspiring individual or a celebrity encounter. This is your chance to help to Tell Our Story of our first 100 years.



All you need to do is record your story (in writing, audio or video) and email it to us, along with your photographs of you or your memorabilia, at [TellingOurStory@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:TellingOurStory@britishlegion.org.uk)

Go to [rbl.org.uk/tellingourstory](http://rbl.org.uk/tellingourstory) for more information.



Dear Members and Friends

This year the RBL will reach its 100th birthday on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. Of the many events planned to celebrate our Centenary, quite a few have had to be shelved due to the Pandemic. However, always resourceful, and undaunted, the RBL will not let the year pass without marking it in the best ways available to us. Details of plans going ahead despite the present restrictions and how you can get involved are shown on the front page.

You have probably noticed the new logo we will be sporting from now on. The concept has been in development for several years with the aim of introducing it in 2021 in part celebration of our Centenary and partly to reflect the RBL's commitment to be here and relevant for the next hundred years.

On the home front and since last we met face to face the Branch members have continued to be in touch with one another, to hold virtual committee meetings, hold our AGM and produce the Quarterly Newsletters. So, although 2020 has been a non-year for many, we have endeavoured to keep all the important dates alive, as for a time it looked as though we would have to forego commemorating VE and VJ Days. However, with the blessing of Haig House and with the assistance of the Town Hall we thankfully managed to mark each with a fitting ceremony.

Not surprisingly the Poppy Launch was quite different this year. We missed Sam Brown and her Ukulele Band, John Green dancing and the collection tins brimming over with good will. However, we did launch, we did sell poppies, and we did it all with the Town Hall, Annie Arscott Poppy Appeal Organiser and the public's support and generosity. So a big thank you to all.



*Mollie Jeffrey - Membership Secretary  
Helen Walsh - Branch Secretary*



*John Green - Henley Branch Standard  
James Nelson - Dunkirk Vetrans Standard*



*Alex and Gillian Manning*

Remembrance Sunday although low key, with the Church, Legion and Town doing what they do best, was dignified and moving. A special live streaming of the complete Remembrance Sunday Service with extra footage was orchestrated by Richard Pinches, photographer of Meadows Farm, Marlow Road, and was an indication of just how our community rose to the occasion and made it extra special for those who could not attend in person. Thank you Richard.

Armistice Day on Wednesday 11 November at 11a.m. was commemorated with the 2 minutes silence in the town square with our community, Branch Standard and Bugler present. I'm sad to report the demise of several members and offer our sincere condolences to their families. Namely Kevin Cook - Bas Davie - Nora Flett - Alan Grimsley - Brian Hughes - Mervyn Jones - Mr G.R. Kerridge - Major L.W. Prescott - Ron and Jean Keir - Brig Malcolm Page MBE - See Henley Standard obituary 22/01/21 and follow-up tribute 05/02/21. **We will remember them**

**We on the committee have felt the loss of our monthly meeting with you all so have hatched a plan to meet during the times ahead by replacing our 3rd Monday Luncheon talks with a Coffee Morning every 3rd Monday starting at 11a.m. These will be held on Zoom, an online meeting place where we can see and catch up with each other and listen to a talk with a cup of coffee in hand - See page 3**

*Anne Evans - Branch Chairman*

## Dates for your Diary

Your Committee has actively pursued different ways of engaging with our Membership during lockdown, and as a result **we invite you to join us for our first ever virtual 'Coffee Morning' Monday 15 March at 11 a.m**

**As mentioned in our recent email, the process of joining these Coffee Mornings will be straightforward for those of you who have Zoom on your computer/ipod/ipad - you will recognise the need for the Meeting ID and Passcode.**

**March 15** - Coffee Morning at 11a.m. '**Meet your Committee & More**' hosted by Anne Evans

Meeting ID: **864 2447 0170**

Passcode: **683502**

**April 19** - Coffee Morning at 11 a.m. - **Quiz** - hosted by Jack Ogden

Meeting ID **856 6607 3969**

Passcode: **402658**

**However if you do not have Zoom installed (it's free to download if you should wish to) the process of joining these Coffee Mornings is simple if you follow the steps given below.**

- The first step is to go to our website - [www.rbl-henley.org](http://www.rbl-henley.org)
- Then select **Dates for your Diary** - and this is what you will see, a screenshot of the Dates for your Diary
- Make a note of the Meeting ID and the Passcode and then use the **Click Here** button which will take you to your browser and you follow the steps to **join the meeting**



# The Royal British Legion

Henley-on-Thames & Peppard Branch ~ BR0753



Home	VE-Day	VJ-Day	<b>Dates for your diary</b>	News	Poppy Appeal & Fundraising	Branch Newsletters	More...
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### Lunch, Talks and Events 2020

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

Venue - The Christ Church Centre 46 Reading Road, Henley RG9 1AG  
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 Helen Walsh on [helentwalsh2014@gmail.com](mailto:helentwalsh2014@gmail.com) or phone 01491 638885

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### COFFEE MORNINGS

**March 15** - Coffee Morning at 11a.m. '**Meet your Committee & More**' hosted by Anne Evans  
Meeting ID: 864 2447 0170  
Passcode: 683502  
If you don't have Zoom Client installed on your computer or Ipad or Ipod [Click Here](#)

**April 19** - Coffee Morning at 11 a.m. - **Quiz** - hosted by Jack Ogden  
Meeting ID 856 6607 3969  
Passcode: 402658  
If you don't have Zoom installed on your computer or Ipad or Ipod [Click Here](#)

**Please** book for these events as soon as possible - it is never too soon! Phone our Secretary, Helen Walsh on 01491 638885 or contact her by email - [helentwalsh2014@gmail.com](mailto:helentwalsh2014@gmail.com)

## About The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion provides practical care, advice and support to serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans of all ages and their families. Our 350,000 members take part in campaigning for new rights to improve the lives of all Service people - past, present and future.

Nicholas served until 2007, going on tour to Iraq twice. But when he came to leave the Army he found it a bigger challenge than he expected.

***“When you come away from that bond in the military, it can be really tough outside because it’s totally different and there’s no bond there.”***

Nicholas only had four months to prepare to leave the military. He would be going into a culture that he hardly knew. He would have to learn everything from which day the bins were put out to what employment opportunities were suitable for him.



***“It was pretty challenging because I knew nothing about the outside world. But then again you get trained to face challenges and you just have to get through. We were just renting in a room, and though I didn’t see it from my wife’s perspective, it was challenging for her, so she reached out to the Legion for support.***

***“Sometimes as a man, you feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness. But we’re all human, we all need help some of the time. We might not think of it, but we just need help.***

***“The Royal British Legion are there to help you, and without them it’ll be really tough.”***

### The Battle Back Centre - helping wounded, injured and sick serving personal to rehabilitate

Last year the RBL spent over £2.5 million running the Battle Back Centre, helping wounded, injured and sick serving personnel to rehabilitate.



***“I’m pretty certain I wouldn’t be alive if I hadn’t gone to Battle Back when I did,” he says. “Since I left the military, a couple of my friends have committed suicide. I definitely fell into that bracket and I had those thoughts for a long time.***

The 18-year-old combat engineer from Devon had been part of the group sent to rescue ambushed Royal Irish fighters who had rolled their vehicle while being attacked.

***“It was dark. The Royal Irish were returning fire into the orchard where we were ambushed from - I don’t remember doing this, but the lads said I got my flashlight out and flashed that I was in there.”They pushed through and grabbed me. Chatting-Walters says it was while driving back to base that they came under Taliban fire again”.***

His injuries were extensive: He’d broken his back in four places, broken his ribs, and had lung contusions, shattered right heel, broken left leg, arm and jaw and had shrapnel injuries to his thighs and groin. The doctors assumed he was paralysed.

Josh joined the Army and loved every minute of it but at the age of 18 developed bipolar disorder and had to leave the service. He could not cope and for 8 years spiralled-down into a life on the streets cutting off all family ties and taking drugs. In desperation he called into a local RBL drop-in centre who funded his trainfare home and helped him to find accommodation. He is now with help learning to live with his disorder. To quote his own words:

***“none of this would have happened without the RBL. They have seen me through the worst time of my life and have stood by me’***

# Royal British Legion

As the Great Bell of Big Ben struck at 9.00am on Sunday, 15 May, 1921, representatives of four veterans' associations from the First World War laid wreaths at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, itself inaugurated only six months before. With this act, the Royal British Legion was born and its remarkable journey in support of the Armed Forces community had begun.

As Her Majesty the Queen has written, in a dedication to be printed in the Legion's forthcoming book, **We Are The Legion**, to be published in Spring to mark our centenary:

*"Since 1921, when four ex-service organisations joined together in a spirit of placing service to others before self, the Legion has worked with alacrity, intelligence, and commitment, pursuing a mission of bringing together nations, communities, and people to provide better futures for our Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.*

*Remarkably, the Legion's purpose has remained unchanged to this day, as it continues to provide help and assistance to the Armed Forces community under a lifelong duty of care, whilst keeping its promise never to forget the service and sacrifice of those who have been prepared to step into harm's way in defence of democracy and freedom."*

**We Are The Legion**, richly illustrated with more than 350 images, is the first book to look at our whole one hundred years, telling the extraordinary story of support to servicemen and women in the UK and around the world - from finding jobs and housing to healing the injuries and trauma of conflict.

It also tells the story of the Legion's transformation into a modern media-savvy charity leading the country in Remembrance but also lobbying government on pensions and researching state-of-the-art rehabilitation while working alongside other leading charities on welfare provision.

**We Are the Legion** covers every aspect of the Legion's work: the history of the poppy, the Legion's international links, and its latest work on rehabilitation and support.

But the book also pulls together lesser-known aspects of the Legion's history, whether of the villages set aside for rehabilitation or the misguided trip to Germany in the 1930s as an attempt to foster friendship between nations.

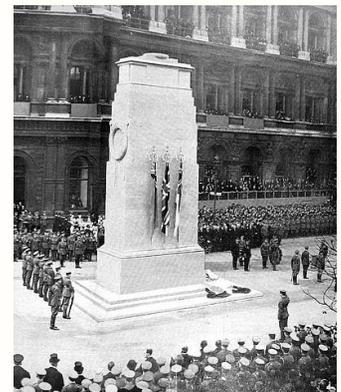
Handsomely presented in a bound landscape quarto edition of 256 pages, it will be published on 6th May in time for the Legion's 100th anniversary and can be pre-ordered from Henley's Bell Book Shop (01491 572583) at a price of £18.99.



## The Cenotaph



Lutyens' Cenotaph was unveiled by the King on 11 November, the second anniversary of the Armistice. At a late stage in the planning, the government decided to hold a funeral for an unidentified soldier exhumed from a grave in France, known as the Unknown Warrior, and inter him in Westminster Abbey, and the decision was taken to make the unveiling part of the funeral procession. George V unveiled the Cenotaph at 11 am on 11 November, with Lutyens in attendance, along with the prime minister and Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The unveiling ceremony was part of a larger procession bringing the Unknown Warrior to be laid to rest in his tomb nearby in Westminster Abbey.



Left - The temporary Cenotaph above on the morning of the Peace Procession in 1919 by Sir William Nicholson

The funeral procession passed the Cenotaph where the waiting King laid a wreath on the Unknown Warrior's gun-carriage before proceeding to unveil the memorial which was draped in large Union Flags, and an abridged version of Sir Edward Elgar's setting of Lawrence Binyon's poem 'For the Fallen' was sung.

The public response to the newly unveiled memorial exceeded even that to the temporary Cenotaph in the aftermath of the armistice. Whitehall was closed to traffic for several days after the ceremony and members of the public began to file past the Cenotaph and lay flowers at its base. Within a week, it was 10 feet (3 metres) deep in flowers and an estimated 1.25 million people had visited it so far.<sup>1</sup>

## Poppy Appeal Organisation

The overall message from Haig House is that they are still adding up the final results of the 2020 Poppy Appeal, but expect it to be in the region of £20 million less than previous years.” Nonetheless with the same careful and prudent management of our resources we expect to meet the coming year on a sound financial footing”



This is what we missed this year

**At branch level** , We are beginning the preparation for the 2021 Poppy Appeal and for this year there will be some changes in how we are organised. After many years at the helm in Sonning and Peppard, Nick Launders has decided to “retire” from the Poppy Appeal organisers role as he and wife Sue plan to relocate south later this year to be closer to family. Coinciding with that, we will establish a single area covering all of Henley and Peppard and this will be run by a small team of organisers who will work closely with Jessica Jenkins of the Regional Poppy Appeal team and Anne Evans as Branch Chairman.

Work is ongoing to identify the small team and further details will be available shortly. In the meantime, we will say our Goodbyes to Nick and Sue at a later time, but we are indebted to his hard work over so many years.

Anybody wanting to volunteer to help later this year please contact Anne Evans or any Committee member.

### The Falkland War - 2 April 1982 -14 June 1982

Trevor Bradshaw was 21 and only a few months into service when The Falklands War began, as he remembers.

On 2 April 1982, Argentinian forces invaded the British overseas territory of the Falkland Islands.

Argentina had claimed sovereignty over the islands for many years and their ruling military junta did not believe that Britain would attempt to regain the islands by force.

Despite the huge distance involved - the Falklands were 8,000 miles away in the South Atlantic - Britain, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, undertook the extraordinary feat of assembling and sending a task force of warships and rapidly refitted merchant ships to the Falklands.



However, the Argentinian airforce still posed a significant threat. The Royal Navy lost several warships to attacks from Argentinian aircraft, which were armed with missiles. Its Fleet Auxiliary ships were attacked at Fitzroy and the supply ship Atlantic Conveyor was also sunk.

British forces landed on the islands on 21 May. After a series of engagements against a well dug-in but ill-trained conscripted Argentinian Army, they began the battle for Stanley, the islands’ capital on 11 June.

The Argentinian forces surrendered on 14 June.

## Henley Army Cadets - News & Henley's Community Champion

*"Henley Detachment, Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force are continuing to drive forward with virtual training. January has seen the start to self directed distance learning, where the cadets are set a monthly task based on a subject."*

*January's subject is Physical Training. Self directed learning allows the cadets to undertake the PT exercise in their own time and upload their results to our google classrooms. The cadets are putting in a great effort.*

*We have also had an intake of eight new recruits since the start of the pandemic.*

*Corporal James & Corporal Spencer have been working hard on their Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award and have achieved the Certificate of Achievement 2020.*

*Finally, I would like to congratulate the following cadets on their recent promotions."*

AUO Mel Haynes, 3360hayne@armymail.mod.uk

Henley Army Cadet Force  
receive qualifications



## Community Champion Tom Fern Henley Army Cadets

*"Captain Tom Fearn was in charge of the Army Cadets for 5 years, he has put so much into the Cadets; growing the unit to around 45 Cadets. The Cadets are provided with many opportunities to go away at weekends and on Summer Camps. Tom is a very good role model for all of the teenagers under his care."*



**Captain Tom Fern (left)**

Capt Tom Fern is with the 2IC/Training Officer of Nivelles Company (South Oxfordshire) which comprises of Henley, Wallingford, Didcot, Wantage and Shrivenham.

## A remarkable young Royal Marine Cadet to address the UN

Monty, a Royal Marine Cadet from Montncashire has had the honour of being invited to address the United Nations, focussing on his research into technology and how it affects the sleep patterns of young people.

Royal Marines Cadet Monty at the age of 14 has written a 55,000 word thesis which has helped a number of schools in the Greater Manchester area as well as NHS professionals, develop advice on how to get a good night's sleep in the age of Zoom.

This thesis, which was presented earlier this year to academics at the University of Manchester, is distilled into a 6 ½ minute presentation before the UN conference on public health, via Zoom to Geneva on Wednesday.

He has also conducted research into the effects of isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic on children, young people and their families, with the results now being used by the NHS. This led to his being awarded the British Citizen Youth Award (BCYA).

Monty's Cadet life has seen him take part in the [Sea Cadets' Everest Challenge](#) where cadets compete to climb a dizzying 8848m of elevation equivalent to the height of Mount Everest. Monty is one of 80 cadets taking part with over £6,000 raised so far.

*"Being a Royal Marine Cadet isn't just learning about the Royal Navy and going tactical in the field. It's more about equipping you with important life skills to go out into the world and achieve anything."* said Monty

As well as being a Royal Marines Cadet, he has found time to set two Guinness World Records for world memory challenges. Monty has also set up the "Young Active Minds" registered charity to share memory techniques with children, irrespective of their financial background or academic attainment.

Captain Phil Russell RN, Captain Sea Cadets, said, *"Royal Marines Cadet Monty's achievements deserve huge credit and it is a sign of his development as a young man that his research is being taken on board by the world's leading authorities."*

## Henley Army Cadets

### Henley Army Cadet Put Her First Aid Skills Into Action.

Henley Army Lance Corporal (LCpl) Natasha Bryant put her into First Aid skills into action, when a passenger who was traveling on a bus began to have a seizure. She has been awarded with a Praiseworthy Certificate for her swift actions, this certificate is the highest level of recognition for First Aid in the Army Cadet Force (ACF).

Within the ACF, the cadets undertake a variety of training, including First Aid. The cadets have opportunities to gain qualifications and skills to which are transferable in Day to Day life.

LCpl Bryant age 15, has been a part of the ACF for over two years and has recently earn herself a promotion. Back in February LCpl Bryant was traveling on a bus with her friend, when a passenger on the bus began to have a seizure. Natasha sprung into action, she moved other passengers away, made the casualty comfortable and told the bus driver about the situation. Whilst the bus driver made a phone call to the emergency services, Natasha comforted the casualty, when he came around, he informed them that he has epilepsy and does not require further medical assistance. As the bus continued its journey, Natasha kept the passenger company until he had reached his stop.

In the Army Cadet Force such actions can be recognised by a National Praiseworthy First Aid Certificate. This is a rare award, where her actions were put in front of the committee to decide whether award was fitting of her actions. LCpl Bryant was found worthy and was presented a Praiseworthy Certificate by Major Thrussell her Company Commanding Officer on a Virtual Parade.

The Praiseworthy citation read “LCpl Natasha Bryant was travelling home from school on a bus when a passenger suffered a seizure. LCpl Bryant managed the scene and moved other passengers away. She made the casualty safe, reassured him and updated the ambulance.”

Major Thrussell the Company Commanding Officer said “This award is very rare and it’s an honour to be able to present this, LCpl Bryant is a cadet that has stepped up and stepped out from the crowd. A massive congratulations on receiving this award”

The Army Cadet Force is a national youth organisation sponsored and supported by the Ministry of Defence for 12-18-year olds, designed to deliver challenging and varied training based on military themes and concepts. Henley Detachment meetings at the Drill Hall in Friday Street & parade every Wednesday from 1900 to 2130hrs. We would love new Cadets and Adult Volunteers to come and visit us and experience something new, whether on our virtual parade night or once we re-open for face to face training. For any Henley Detachment enquires please email 2Lt Mel Haynes, [3360hayne@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:3360hayne@armymail.mod.uk)

1. The Army Cadets give young people - from all walks of life - access to fun, friendship, action, and adventure. We challenge young people to learn more, do more and try more. We inspire them to aim high and go further in life, no matter what they aim to do. With 41,000 cadets and 9,500 adults in more than 1,600 locations around the UK, the Army Cadets makes a big impact on young people, parents and communities. For more information visit [armycadets.com](http://armycadets.com)

2. Oxfordshire Army Cadets has over 20 detachments in every major populated location in the county.

