



THE NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2018

BR0753



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Our Chairman,
John Green, represented the
Town, and the Henley and Peppard
Branch of the Royal British Legion at
the momentous recreation of the 1928
pilgrimage of war widows and veterans to the
battle fields of Belgium and France.

John was accompanied by his 17 year old grandson, Edward
Bloomer, who laid a wreath at the Menin Gate memorial on
behalf of Henley-on-Thames

A PROUD SON & GRANDSON

Great Pilgrimage 90 - Ypres



From the citizens of
Henley-on-Thames



"Our eternal gratitude"

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

GREAT PILGRIMAGE 90

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

Autumn Meeting Talks & Events 2018

17 Sep- Capt Kamran Irani -SERV OBN -

Service by **E**mergency **R**iders **V**olunteers - **O**xfordshire,
Buckinghamshire, **B**erkshire, and **N**orthamptonshire

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. Their service is undertaken using a fleet of liveried motorcycles.

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



27 October Poppy Appeal Launch

Henley-on-Thames, Falaise Square 11 am



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'



11 November Remembrance Sunday & Lunch

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



17 December

Branch Christmas Lunch
Christ Church Centre
12.30 for 1 pm

Brian Hughes BEM

The Henley and Peppard Branch monthly meeting in August was a very special occasion and celebration in honour of our member and guest of honour Brian Hughes BEM.

A highly respected and much-loved Henley man, army veteran, standard bearer and fundraiser for the Poppy Appeal was awarded a County Certificate by County Chairman Lynda Atkins, pictured below with Brian's daughter and John Green, in particular appreciation of his loyal service as County Standard Bearer for more than a decade.



Our meeting room at the Christ Church Centre was filled to capacity with representatives of other British Legion branches, many local well-wishers, and our own members.

Only last year Brian had been awarded the British Empire Medal by the Queen and presented by John Harwood, the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, for his devoted service to the Legion.

Armed Forces Day



They raised £1,206.17 and invited John Green to their drill night on 4th July to formally handover the takings.

A remarkable achievement by these young cadets.

On Saturday the 30th June to mark Armed Forces Day, the Oxford (The Rifles) ACF Henley Detachment collected for the Poppy Appeal in Henley during one of the hottest days of the year.



Great Pilgrimage 90

In August 1928, ten years after the First World War ended, thousands of former soldiers returned to France, along with the widows and families of thousands of others who never returned home, to make a pilgrimage to the battle fields of Belgium and France.

This year in August, 90 years later, the Royal British Legion commemorated this event by recreating it with a Great Pilgrimage 90 and from around the UK and other parts of Europe and beyond, the branches of the RBL sent over 1,100 Standard Bearers and the same number of Wreath Bearers, to march through the town of Ypres, in Belgium, to lay wreaths in memory of the fallen.



GP90 started with two days taken up with visits to the battlefields, the cemeteries and the memorials to the fallen. The number of cemeteries all within nearly a mile of each other is staggering;

In those cemeteries, row after row of graves, each one identical, or nearly, as about two thirds were marked only with the words 'A soldier of the Great War, known unto God' because so many were never identified.

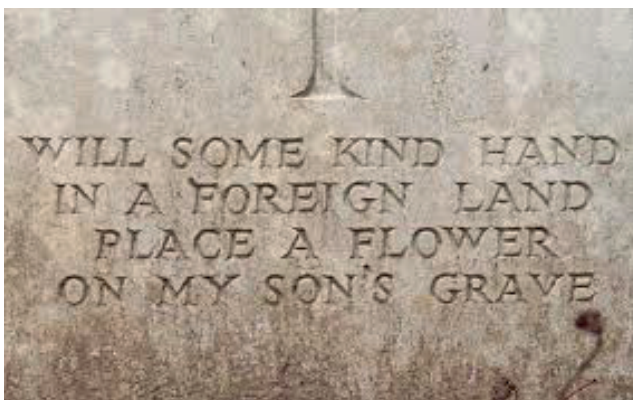


At Delville Wood and Vimy Ridge it is estimated that the land around contained the remains of thousands more British and German soldiers who couldn't be recovered from the battlefields because the ground had been churned up so badly.

Each year the remains of yet more dead come to light as the ground reveals its secrets.

But their names have not been forgotten. At five locations the monuments bear the names of those who have no known graves.

Some of these soldiers must also be amongst those who are only 'Known unto God', but many more lie undiscovered in the fields and woods of France and Belgium.



Something less known is that the relatives of the fallen were encouraged to word their own inscriptions on the headstones!



Great Pilgrimage 90



The huge number of names on each memorial is truly staggering! Tyne Cot memorial for instance, bears the names of some 35,000 men of the British and New Zealand forces who have no known grave, nearly all of whom died between August 1917 and November 1918.

On the final day, Wednesday 8th August 2018 the Pilgrimage culminated with a mass parade and march to the Menin Gate to lay the wreaths, following part of the route the soldiers took from Ypres station to the front line and by which so few returned.

At the Menin Gate memorial a short memorial service was taken by John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York.

A wreath was laid by the King of Belgium and another on behalf of our government by the British Ambassador to Belgium. Finally the wreath Bearers laid their tributes, a wreath containing a Remembrance message from their communities.



Photo courtesy of John Downing MBE



John Green's 17 year old grandson, Edward Bloomer, laid a wreath at the Menin Gate memorial on behalf of Henley-on-Thames

Following the parade, everyone there was encouraged to join together to take part in an afternoon of comradeship and entertainment in the Great Square.

The London Welsh Male Voice Choir sang and was joined by the British Legion Band in a brilliant joint concert for the public in the square at Ypres during that afternoon.

Comment:

This could be the last time the Royal British Legion will be able to mass so many standards together at one time. As the years pass the branches are getting smaller and some are disappearing altogether.

We need new recruits to keep the memories of those brave men alive, if only to remind us of the terrible cost of war. For if they are forgotten the danger of it happening all over again is ever present

If you think not, its worth remembering that each decade since then has seen British military dying "in some corner of a foreign field" (to quote Rupert Brooke.)



Photo courtesy of John Downing MBE

Nijmegen Marches - Holland

Four members of the Henley Branch of the Royal British Legion completed the Nijmegen Marches last month.



New comers to 'The Walk', Ania Kozniewska and Judith Phelan are to be congratulated, completing 30km per day!

If you wish to support the Poppy Appeal please go to Judith Phelan's just-giving page
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/judith-phelan>

This was the third year that John and Stan completed the walk and on the evening of the second day John celebrated his 83rd birthday.



Along with 47,000 others, John Green, Chairman of the Local Branch and fellow member Stan Ainsley walked for 4 days covering 40 km per day to raise money for the Poppy Appeal.



War Memorial Hospital - Land donated by John Cecil Walker

Arthur John Walker, Captain - 11 Yorkshire Regiment

Arthur was born in Reading On December 24th 1896. He was educated at Wellingborough School where he excelled both at academia and sports and was in the School Officer Training Corp.

In 1914 he was awarded the Wicks Scholarship to St John's College, Oxford. However, he enlisted into the 11th Battalion on 8th October 1914 as a Lieutenant. Before Christmas he had risen to the rank of Captain (probably the youngest in the British Army). In June 1915 he was selected for service in the Dardanelles, arriving in Gallipoli on 16th July 1915, where he was attached to the 6th Battalion Manchester Regiment.



Captain Arthur John Walker, having served less than 3 weeks was killed in action during the 3rd battle of Krithia on August 7th 1915 aged just 19. He is buried in the Redoubt Cemetery, Helles, Turkey.

Colonel Aspinall of the Yorkshires wrote later to his parents, "It will be of some consolation to you to know that in his short career he had proved himself thoroughly capable of filling the rank he had attained and which in his case must be almost a record in the annals of the army. I never once regretted giving him the promotion he merited"

**Captain Walker was the youngest son of
John Cecil and Mary Annie Tombs Walker of "the Mount" Henley-on-Thames.
His father donated the land on which the Henley War Memorial Hospital was built**

The Black Horse Pub at Checkendon



A replica of a Sopwith Pup was made by Martin out of plywood and strung most effectively between two trees.

The Sopwith Pup was first used in combat in 1916 towards the end of the Somme campaign.



As well as the plane there were two old motorbikes, one of which was a 1912 Triumph Roadstar as well as a Ford Model T car from the 1920s on display.

Also a table of artefacts and newspapers of the period were laid out for all to enjoy.



Martin and Margaret make an annual trip in an old car to Ypres in Belgium around Armistice Day to visit the grave of Margaret's Great Uncle.

John Green said, "Everyone entered into the spirit of the event. The highlight in the evening was the playing of the last post and the reveille and the observance of a two minute silence by the gathering some of whom had lost relatives in the Great War and others who had served in Afghanistan and the Gulf. A truly moving commemoration."

Photo's courtesy of Henley Herald

Calling all Church Bell Ringers

Ring for *Peace* *Armistice 100*



Bell ringing was severely curtailed during the first world war: the aim of the project is to replicate the outpouring of relief that came in 1918.

The British and German governments are issuing a unique joint appeal to communities across the world to ring their church, military and other bells in unison on Armistice Day to mark the hundredth anniversary of the end of the first world war.



Photograph: John Voos/Alamy

Across the UK, many thousands of bell ringers at more than 3,000 towers are already preparing to join the international initiative to celebrate the day the guns fell silent after more than four years of fighting – and the peace and friendship that now exists between former enemies.

More than 1,400 of our bell ringing community laid down their lives for peace in the 'war to end all wars.' We know in retrospect that wars were not 'ended', but we also know that there is an ever increasing movement to address this.

Our fallen bell ringers came from all walks of life, as we ringers still do today (from skilled workers to academics to business people – you name it!), and today we are all united in wanting to ring out a message of peace around the world.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers would like to recruit 1400 ringers in 2018, the same number as those who fell in the Great War.

If you are interested please contact your local church

Congratulations to Rosemary Powell on her MBE



Rosemary collected in the first ever Poppy Appeal in 1921 as a 6 year old girl,

She has continued ever since.

97 years later she has had the ultimate recognition.

