

**HENLEY & PEPPARD BRANCH**  
**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - NEWSLETTER**  
**SPRING - 2015**



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### **Editorial**

#### **The Threshold of the Year**

“Hope smiles on the threshold of the year to come,  
Whispering that it will be happier”

*Alfred Lord Tennyson*

### **Committee Changes**

Anne Evans asked to stand down after two and a half lively years as Branch Treasurer. We are all very grateful for the time and effort she put into this post. Anne will stay on the committee as Assistant Editor of the branch newsletter and will continue to organise the meeting venue and monthly branch lunch. Her title will be Events Manager.

Her successor is Martin Goodier whom we are delighted to welcome to the Branch.

### **Membership Changes**

**Membership Recruitment Drive** - The membership of the Branch has grown impressively over the last 2 years with nearly 30 new members. This has brought many new faces to the meetings and contributed to the rich mixture of interests and experiences we have in the Branch already. We now have over 100 members and our meetings usually attract over 40 for the Monday talk and lunch.

We would like to continue to expand and are offering **first year membership free** to any new members who join in 2015. So now is the time to persuade your friends and family to join us. The Membership of £18 for the year will be reimbursed by the Branch once the completed application form is handed in to Stan Ainsley or any Committee member.

**The Membership System is Changing** - At National level a single database covering members, volunteers, helpers and supporters is being created so that any contact with the Legion should be simplified for all of us.

- You will have a secure on-line access to your membership account where you can log in, amend personal details, change payment methods and pay your Membership renewal.
- Additionally new members will be able to join the Branch on-line and their renewal date becomes the anniversary of joining and NOT October 1st.
- Existing member's renewal date will continue to be October 1<sup>st</sup>.

There are other changes being planned so more updates to follow in future Newsletters!

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**2015 Lunch Meeting Diary**

**Mondays**

16 February

16 March

20 April

18 May

15 June

20 July

17 August

21 September

19 October

8 November

14 December

In general the timings are as published below unless otherwise advised

**Talk 11.30**

**Lunch 12.00 for 12.30**

One slight change - the Booking Form usually attached here has never been used to my (AE) knowledge so I've taken an executive decision to remove it!

**Previous Events**

**Tuesday 25 November 2014**

***Cheque Presentation***

*Aliquando Choir Committee presenting a cheque of £6000 raised at the RBL Poppy Appeal Concert on 8 November 2014 in St Mary's Church, Henley.*



**Wednesday 26 November 2014**

***"Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red"***



*Fiamma Montagu, producer of the exhibition presented an exceptionally relevant and moving description of her involvement in that extraordinary initiative.*

*A truly amazing event which made everyone who attended immensely proud!*

*Thanks also to Stan Ainsley who helped Fiamma put her presentation together. There were wonderful photographic inclusions too for those of us unable to get to the Tower of London to see for ourselves.*



**Monday 17 January – Branch Lunch 2015**

*Lt Colonel Christopher Warren, Secretary General of the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League, gave a very interesting and informative talk on this subject which was much appreciated.*

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**Branch Events 2015**

**16 February – Branch Lunch – The Guardian Story - Lt Cdr. Malcolm Lewis RD, RNR (Retd)**



In National Warship Week, March 1942, Henley Town Council and the Henley Rural District Councils adopted HMS Guardian, a Royal Navy Fleet net-layer. Over £500,000 was raised locally with Government Bonds and National Savings Certificates - a very large sum at the time.

He will also talk about her similarly named predecessor which struck an iceberg in the South Atlantic in 1789 on the way to our new colony, New South Wales. Her Captain, Edward Riou became a national hero after he managed to save the half submerged vessel and beach her near Cape Town.

The last RN Guardian was a converted oil rig support vessel that served as guard ship in the Falkland Islands after the war against Argentina in 1982 .....and there is much more to tell!

**16 March – Branch Lunch – Liz Fredricks, RBL Legacy Manager**

The speaker on this occasion will be Liz Fredricks, the RBL Legacy Manager.

She will be talking about her job and in particular the Legacy Battlefield Tours that she organises.

**2015 - A year of Anniversaries**

We have a year of anniversaries to note - Magna Carta, Agincourt, Waterloo and many others (including Gallipoli). However, one important one, less well known, is the foundation of what was until recently St Dunstons'. Its name was changed last year to Blind Veterans UK, but this has not yet caught on widely.

It was founded a century ago by Sir Arthur Pearson, who strongly believed that no one who has served our country should battle blindness alone. Today over 3,900 vision-impaired ex-Service men and women are being supported by the charity. Blind veterans are helped to recover their independence and to discover a life beyond sight loss. Since its foundation 100 years ago, the charity has helped more than 33,000 blind veterans to rebuild their lives which is an incredible achievement.

Shirley Lees, our Poppy Appeal Organiser, has some personal experiences with the work of Blind Veterans UK and writes that her father went blind suddenly when in his 80s and through them received assistance with mobility and computer training. Her mother-in-law too is ex-Service and registered blind, and is presently a resident at the charity's premises near Brighton.

Shirley takes two men to the monthly club meetings for the visually impaired. One of them, who went completely blind in his 70s, has learned to become very independent. He lives alone, but can now cook. He goes on walks and sailing trips and has even learned to ski!

Blind Veterans UK also devotes a lot of its resources to the care of young service people who are suffering from the effects of road-side bombs. RBL has made a significant contribution to the Blind Veterans UK premises in Llandudno, funding the construction of a new wing, called the Poppy Wing.

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**This & That**

**Henley and Peppard Poppy Appeal update**

A joint record sum of over £40,000 was raised for Henley & Peppard. A remarkable achievement by all those concerned and a testament to the generosity of our community in this emotive time.

**Two further lunchtime talks in the pipeline**

- We will be marking the anniversary of Waterloo in June, when Peter Blaker and Malcolm Page will be putting on a double act about the battle and events leading up to it.
- Stan Ainsley is working on a talk about the Cadbury family, chocolate production and their welfare work. The date for this has not yet been decided.

**Boat Trip**

The Committee is looking into the possibility of having another boat trip and are therefore in the process of obtaining quotations for a two course meal with coffee. We will keep you posted as to progress. However, in order to make this a viable proposition you will be encouraged to bring family and guests. Neighbouring RBL Branches will also be invited to join us. If necessary, we will allocate vacancies on a quota basis.

**Extreme Temptation !**

Before saying grace at the branch lunch on Mon 19th January, Fr Martyn let it be known he was attempting a sponsored alcohol free January in aid of Cancer Research.

To make the challenge even more difficult he volunteered to man the bar, which he did with great aplomb! For those wishing to support his brave effort please contact Fr Martyn on 01491 577340

**Spread the Word**

Your chairman and committee urge you to wear your RBL badge at all times (OK perhaps not in the bath!) but this simple act often results in a chance conversation which can lead to increased membership or a request to the Legion for help.

**Legion Magazine**

Have you read your Legion magazine? If so why not leave your copy at the Surgery, Hairdresser, Pub etc for none-members to become better informed about the Legion and its objectives.

**19 July 2015 – London “Poppy Walk”**

We have been kindly notified by Mark Garwood, who has recently been appointed Community Fundraiser for Oxfordshire, about a ‘Poppy Walk’ fundraising event in London on 19 July 2015. It begins at Wellington Barracks and follows a 10km trail past historic sites. It is intended to test our knowledge of London and its history! Fund raising will be by means of sponsorship.

For more information, please contact Mark Garwood on:

**0203 053 7271 or 07500 225 2315 [mgarwoodbritishlegion.org.uk](http://mgarwoodbritishlegion.org.uk).**

**Administration**

Please don't forget to lodge your attendance for the Branch Lunchtime Talks and Lunch with Stan in good time. – cash or cheque payment on the day. His secretarial contact details are above.