

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



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Editorial

With the Poppy Appeal and the Remembrance season over, the thick, scratchy uniforms back with their moth balls we can now move on to telling you about forthcoming events, pausing only to take into account the decisions taken at the Committee meeting on 23 November.

Our aim is to give you as much information on the future as we can, with just a backward glance at the many recent events, particularly the Poppy Appeal. However, it can be recorded that this has been a successful half year and the first half of 2016 promises to be at least as busy.

Stop Press!

Saturday 5 December - Living Advent Calendar for Poppy Appeal

The Poppy Appeal will be fund raising through the sale of raffle tickets as part of the Living Advent Calendar on Saturday 5 December at 6 pm at Leander Club. Please encourage all your friends and family to come along to this free community event.

Please let Shirley Lees know if you would be willing to act as a Marshall on the evening or have any suggestion for good raffle prizes.

See www.livingadventcalendar.co.uk

Branch Meetings & Lunches



21 December 2015 - **Christmas Lunch**

18 January 2016

15 February

21 March

18 April

16 May

20 June

18 July

15 August

19 September

17 October

*13 November – Lunch only @ 12.30

19 December 2016 – **Christmas Lunch**

In general the timings are
as published below
unless otherwise advised

**Talk 11.30
Lunch 12.00 for 12.30**

NB - All Branch Meetings, Lunches
and Talks are held in the Christ
Church Centre
unless otherwise advised

Thanks & Previous Events

A huge thanks to David Lees, Jean Rook and John Green who gave such interesting talks on such diverse subjects:

Monday 17 August - Branch Lunch and Talk by David Lees
"Malta 1940-43-an island under siege."

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Monday 21 September –Branch Lunch and Talk by Jean Rook
“Working at Bletchley Park during WWII”

Gallant Doug also knows how to treat the ladies!

Monday 19 October – Branch and Annual General Meeting.
John Green gave Part 3 of his Talk on his father’s letters written home during WW1

Sunday 8 November – Remembrance Sunday

Henley and surrounding towns and villages paid tribute to fallen servicemen on Remembrance Sunday. Hundreds of people gathered in front of Henley town hall just before 11am for a service to honour the Town’s war dead.

Beforehand there was a parade featuring veterans and serving servicemen and women, civic dignitaries and representatives of the Henley and Peppard branch of the Royal British Legion, the fire service, police and St John Ambulance as well as sea, army and air cadets, guides, brownies, scouts, cubs and beavers who carried their standards.

This was followed by a fly-past by two helicopters — a Chinook and a Puma — from RAF Benson.

The Rev Canon Martyn Griffiths, rector of St Mary’s Church, began the 30-minute service, saying: “In recent months we have brought to mind several significant anniversaries in the stories of the First and Second World Wars and in the coming years there will be many others.

“Today we gather, as we do each year, to pray for peace in the world God made and peace for which so many have already laid down their lives and for which so many continue to die, day by day.



An alternate view of Remembrance Sunday from the top of the steps

I have always regarded it as a great privilege to be able to lead services of Remembrance, especially on Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. As they always fall in November, the weather has also always been a major contributing factor - from warm and sunny in Manchester (honestly!) to a howling gale, rain, sleet, and

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snow all at once in Preston. Here in Henley I count it a double privilege because I can retreat slightly under the shelter of the Town Hall door if inclement weather is battering the rest of you outside - though I can only remember one unpleasant day in the last 11 years!

One can never not be moved by the sight of the, sadly decreasing, number of WW2 veterans who proudly join in the march past, and who share the loudest applause with the youngest members of the march from the cadet forces and the other uniformed organisations. But of course a great deal of preparation goes into the service each and every year. Here in Henley we usually start to think about the service in September when the Mayor and our Chairman call a meeting which involves the Town Hall staff, myself and the Officer Commanding the march past. There are always lessons to be learnt from last years' Service which we try to incorporate into the service so it should be getting better each year. Some of you may have noticed the changed arrangements for the start of the march past this year, which seemed to work!

On the day itself I follow the Parish Church Choir up Hart Street just in time to join the rest of the Mayor's party before they come out of the Town Hall and form up outside. Timing the start of the service so that the Parish Church Clock chimes 11 just at the start of the silence is my one nightmare - after that, it's up to our excellent bugler!

But the view I get from the top of the steps is quite unique: there are, of course, the members of the RBL and the other uniformed organisations - but then spreading out behind them are the people of the town. I think numbers have consistently grown over the last few years, after a period of stagnation and even decline. Keeping the silence is certainly done with enormous dignity by everyone - or at least, woe-betide the lout who thinks he can talk all the way through: if looks could kill! It is moving to see all ages simply standing still and thinking or praying during that two minutes' silence.

The hymns and the prayers and reading that follow still seem to catch the hearts of those attending, and it's really rather good to hear the choir's lead overtaken by a lusty rendering of Bread of Heaven or some other well-known hymn. The Mayor's address too, which I know the holders of that office would say is the most important address they give during their mayoral year, is central to the service, and often reminds us of the more local aspects of our Remembrance.

For me, Remembrance Sunday remains an important day in the calendar; not only does it bring to mind the sacrifices made for King or Queen and country; it should also remind us of the freedoms we now enjoy as a result of those sacrifices, and of the value we should all place on that freedom. Soon we shall be celebrating Christmas, a new life born into the world, a life that was world-changing. The Prince of Peace comes among us to bring us God's own peace, a peace which is 'beyond all understanding': but until that happy and glorious day, we must remember those who brought us national peace, often at great cost, and secured our freedom to worship and praise God for 'all those who have gone before us, marked with the sign of faith.'

The Rev'd Canon Martyn R Griffiths ssc BTh PGCEd
Rector of Henley with Remenham

11.11.11 - Henley Pays its Respects on Armistice Day



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At 11 o'clock the town fell silent for 2 minutes to mark Armistice day. On the town hall steps a ceremony was led by Brigadier Malcolm Page, President of the Henley and Peppard branch of the Royal British Legion, who read 'Ode to the Fallen'.



Malcolm was joined on the steps by the Mayor, many Henley Town Councillors and Mike Willoughby from the Henley Lest We Forget Project.

Three standard bearers were also at the ceremony – Colin Davies, Brian Hughes and John Green, from the Henley and Peppard Royal British Legion and Stuart Henderson (trumpeter) formerly of the Scots Guards.

Armistice Day is commemorated every year on November 11 to mark the *armistice* signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany at Compiègne, France, for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front of World War I, which took effect at eleven o'clock in the morning—the “eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.


Poppy Dro(p)ne!

On Armistice Day a unique act of remembrance unfolded on Makin's recreation ground. Pupils from Trinity, Valley Road, Sacred Heart and Badgemore primaries together prepared a giant poppy which was photographed by a drone overhead.

John Green in WW1 uniform explained to the children the history and the significance of the poppy as an enduring symbol of remembrance. Brian Hughes dipped the Branch standard during a one minutes silence observed with great reverence by the youngsters. The Mayor Lorraine Hillier thanked the children and congratulated Cllr Dave Eggleton for organising the event.

Afterwards the children surrounded Brian and John and plied them with questions relating to Brian's medals and John's WW1 Lee-Enfield rifle!

Forthcoming Branch Events

Monday 21 December 2015! - Christmas Lunch  In anticipation of another wonderful feast, a vote of thanks to Doug for preparing delicious lunches for our monthly meetings though out the year, not forgetting his able assistant James, whose effervescent service adds hugely to our enjoyment!

NB - This is always a most enjoyable and festive lunch, so please book early to avoid disappointment and to make Doug's life a little less stressful. **Book by Thursday 17th**

While we're on the subject, we must thank Vanessa and the management of Christ Church Centre most warmly for making us so welcome all year round.

Forthcoming Branch Events 2016 & Dates for your Diary

Monday 28 January – *Branch Lunch and Talk by Dr Peter Ashby*
'The Work of St Johns Ambulance'

Monday 15 February – *Branch lunch and Talk by Bill King*
'The River Thames at War'

Monday 21 March – *Branch Lunch and Talk by Elizabeth Hazeldine - local historian*
'The Estates of Henley'

Monday 18 April - Branch Lunch and Talk by Brian Head
'Blind Veterans' and his own experience of living with visual impairment

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Monday 16 May – Branch Lunch and Talk by Richard Poad of Maidenhead Heritage Centre

'Grandma flew Spitfires - The Air Transport Auxiliary at White Waltham aerodrome'

Monday 20 June – Branch Lunch and Talk by Malcolm Page

'Battle of Jutland'

Monday 18 July – Branch Lunch and Talk by Alex Manning

'The Somme – a War Walk'

Thursday 21 April - **Bletchley Park Trip** (resurrected)

The branch will be visiting the home of the Codebreakers and the first computer, Alan Turing, and where our local branch member Jean Rook was stationed during the war. If any member is aware of anybody who would wish to attend but requires financial assistance, please speak to a committee member. Similarly, please discuss any disability requirements or needs for transport to/from Henley station."

Details are as follows:



Transport

Coach departs Henley-on-Thames Station Car Park at 9am & returns around 6pm

Cost

£35 per person which includes travel and entrance fee to Bletchley.

You can also pre-order a guide book for £3.50. Please confirm your guide book order at the time of booking and include it in your payment total.

Booking & Payment

Cheque for the total sum as appropriate, to be made payable to **The Royal British Legion, Henley Branch** and sent to the Branch Treasurer, Martin Goodier, 16 Reades Lane, Sonning Common, RG4 9LP.

Alternatively, you can hand Martin your cheque at the next Branch Lunch.

PS –Just to forewarn members that there is a fair bit of walking involved at Bletchley.

Please let us know if any assistance is required or if transport is needed to/from Henley station.

Poppy Appeal Launch 24 October - Henley & Peppard

The Poppy Appeal launch with Sam Brown and the ukuleles on Saturday 24 October was most enjoyable. The event brings together the entire community young and old to enjoy the music and impromptu dancing and serves to announce the arrival of the poppies. The mayor, Loraine Hillier, bought the first poppy from our branch Chairman, John Green.



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Poppy Appeal Report - Henley & Peppard



Henley-on-Thames

I am delighted to report that the House to House, Street and Static collections in Henley in 2015 slightly exceeded our record year in 2014

Figures:

Statics	£6 248	Up	2%
House to House	£4 887	Down	12%
Street	£9 846	Up	16%
TOTAL	£20 981	Up	3%

The following Saturday 31 October, we were blessed with glorious sunshine and Mike Willoughby kindly brought along a fascinating display of his research into local WW1 casualties. In the evening, some of us were lucky enough to attend the Red and Black dance in the Town Hall with the fabulous Sound Force Big Band, which raised over £5000 for the Poppy Appeal.

On Remembrance Saturday, once again the Military Vehicle Society and all three local cadet groups displayed admirable fortitude to help with the collections despite pouring rain.

I would like to extend particular thanks to Andrew Dickson and Martin Akehurst, who dealt with all the static cans; to Sam Brown and all the ukulele players; to Mike Willoughby for his display and to Connie Butt who organised the dance which raised over £5000; to the Military Vehicle Society and the cadet groups, and to all the collectors who kindly give up their time to make the Henley Poppy Appeal such a success, led of course, by Brian Hughes.

Peppard

Nick Launders was pleased to reports that the collection from all totalled a very respectable £3,378.69

RBL Poppy Appeal - Facts of Interest

Thanks to the generosity of the public, The Royal British Legion answered over 450,000 calls for help last year from the armed forces community. Examples of our work include Personnel Recovery Centres, the Battle Back centre for adaptive sports, representing widows at inquests, careers and financial advice, break centres and funding a research project into blast injury at Imperial College. A Channel 4 programme earlier this year featured pioneering work with Alzheimer's sufferers in RBL care homes. In addition, we support veterans with Admiral Nurses, adaptations to the home and a handy van service. Some welfare services have been provided confidentially to Henley residents. If you know of anyone who might benefit from such services, please contact Nick Launders, our branch Vice Chairman (01491 628 243) who deals with welfare matters and who reports below on the future of welfare at Branch Level.

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The Future of Welfare at Branch Level

The reorganisation of the Legion's services for welfare provision has provided a direct helpline (0808 802 8080), Pop in Shops in some urban areas and a special website www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help. This means that the public now has immediate access to advice and help from the Royal British Legion anywhere in the UK. Branches, however, are only just being integrated into this new system.

In the New Year Henley Branch will form a Welfare Committee. We hope to recruit welfare experts from inside and beyond our membership to support the national effort and to ensure that local welfare tasks are put in hand. More details will be published in the next News Letter.

News from the Chair

Agreement of Affiliation update

Certificates marking an agreement of affiliation between the town's three cadet forces and the Royal British Legion were presented at the reception.

The Mayor and Mr Green gave the certificates to Sea Cadet Charles Washbourn, Air Cadet Joe Day and Army Cadet Lauren Hunt. John Green said: "Part of the ethos of these cadets is work in the community and that is also part of the Legion's function.

"Our intention is to work together to strengthen these activities. It's to try to ensure that the gap doesn't widen between the old and the new, but narrows."



Lest we Forget Project

Mike Willoughby's 'Lest we Forget' project continues to honour the memory of soldiers from Henley and District who until now were not noted on local memorials and where buried in unmarked graves. Thanks to Mike's efforts two new gravestones were consecrated and three memorial services held for the following:

Capt Arthur Walker (Yorkshire Regt)
died Gallipoli 7 August 1915

Sapper William Woolby (Royal Engineers)
drowned Wargrave 20 August 1918

Pte Tidman (4th Royal Berkshire Regt) was 28 and died on September 27, 1917 from an illness after serving with the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He was buried on October 2, 1917 in the same grave as his younger brother James who had died in 1915, aged 16. James served with the Essex Regiment, enlisting on December 31, 1912, when he was only 14. He served for two years until he was discharged in March 1914 as he was no longer physically fit. He was suffering from tuberculosis when he died.

Branch Standard Bearers and Committee Members attended each of these services which were fully reported in the Henley Standard and on the Henley Herald on-line news.

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This & That

Wednesday 2 December - 'Above the Dreaming Spires' at the SOLDIERS OF OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM in Woodstock

7pm to 8.30 – Tickets £10 available from the Museum or in online shop.



**Above the
Dreaming Spires**
Oxfordshire's Great War Aviation Story
**Peter Dye— Former Director General
of the RAF Museum Hendon**
2nd December 2015
7.00pm— 8.30pm
Tickets £10.00
[Click Here for further information](#)

**Lecture
2
Dec**

The First World War was the first conflict in which air combat became a major focus. Men from all nations and walks of life were drawn to the skies and the romance of flying. Peter Dye, former Director General of the RAF Museum Hendon, who curated the exhibition 'Above the Dreaming Spires', presents an evening of high flying adventure with stories of the men and fascinating facts about the technological advancements that came with the emergence of the Royal Flying Corps

The Museum and Exhibition are well worth a visit and have good accessibility:

By car: via A44 Oxford to Evesham. Please use postcode OX20 1SN for your sat-nav.

By bus: S3 from Oxford city centre. 242 from Witney. For bus time tables see www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk The nearest train station is located in Long Hanborough which is 4.1 miles away.

Disabled Parking

Disabled parking is located directly outside The Oxfordshire Museum. There are also other spaces there but these are limited. There is a FREE public car park a short walk away in Hensington Road