

**HENLEY & PEPPARD BRANCH
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
NEWSLETTER**



SUMMER 2014

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Editorial:

The 4th of August 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the day Britain entered one of the costliest conflicts in its history, the First World War, which ended on Armistice Day, 11th November 1918.

Almost everyone in the UK has an ancestor directly affected by the First World War. The losses were felt across every UK town and village as the lives of nearly one million lives men and women were sacrificed in service of the British Empire.

The Royal British Legion will be joining in the commemoration of all those who served and sacrificed from British, Dominion and Imperial forces from countries including the UK, Republic of Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa.

Events

Monday 21 July – *Branch Lunch and Talk*

- 10.15 – Committee Meeting
- 11.15 – Talk by David Innis on the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum
- 12.30 – Lunch

Friday 25 July - *A social evening event in St Mary's Chantry House at 7.00*

Retired Major Steve Anning will give a presentation titled – '**War: what's different, what hasn't changed**' which will be his perspective of life as a soldier in the Army today. Major Anning served in Northern Ireland (twice) and Iraq and then in Afghanistan where he supported and mentored the Afghan National Army. He subsequently spent time in the Ministry of Defence and now works as a Security Consultant

Please make a point of inviting your family and friends as this will be an opportunity to meet, eat, drink and be merry !

Saturday 2 August – *a Vigil in St Mary's Church at 7.30*

Sunday 3 August – *Great War Centenary*

A Drum-Head Service will be held in the Market Place at 15.00 to unveil a new memorial to Henley and District's "forgotten" soldiers of the Great War. The ceremony will be led by the Queen's Representative, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Tim Stevenson. However, this will be a major event supported by the Branch with Standards on parade, 2 minutes silence marked by a bugler sounding the Last Post and Reveille

Monday 4 August – *A Requiem Service – St Mary's Church at 11 am*

Monday 4 August – *Lights out – Candles lit - 10 – 11pm*

"The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our life-time"

A remark attributed to British statesman Sir Edward Grey on the eve of the First World War. – Aug 3rd

Monday 4 August - *Act of Remembrance*

Among the many events to mark the centenary of the outbreak of WWI, the Peppard War Memorial Committee will be organising an Act of Remembrance to be followed by a tea party. Members of the Branch are invited to attend, and the Peppard Standard Bearer, Colin Davis has kindly agreed to support the event. The Peppard CofE Primary School has been invited to take part. We hope that this will be an occasion to contact relatives of those who fought in WWI.

For more information, please contact Nick Launders (01491) 628243; nicklaunders@gmail.com.

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Sunday 10 August – *The Great March*

On 10th Aug 1914 a rally was held in Newark market place by the newly formed 1st/8th Bn Sherwood Foresters. That day they marched from Newark to Radcliffe before training at Harpenden and eventually heading for the trenches in France. John's father, a lance corporal at the time described the march in his letter home dated 11 Aug 1914.

100 years later on 10th Aug 2014 it is planned to re-enact the event in honour of those that fought and the many who never returned. Your chairman, John Green, intends to join the march - about 16 miles - wearing WW1 kit and carrying a rifle .He will be collecting for the Poppy Appeal on the way. Will you support him?

NB - Monday 18 August - *no meeting or lunch in August !!*

Monday 15 September	<i>Visit by the National Chairman Christ Church Centre</i>	Booking for lunch is essential Timings to be advised
Sunday 21 September	<i>75th anniversary Battle of Britain Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey</i>	Information regarding booking is attached to this document.
Monday 20 October	<i>AGM</i>	Christ Church Centre
Saturday 8 November	<i>Festival of Remembrance</i>	8 tickets on offer – please notify Stan Ainsley by 18 July
Saturday 8 November	<i>RBL Poppy appeal concert</i>	Tickets on sale now! Early booking is strongly recommended.
Sunday 9 November	<i>Remembrance Service & Lunch</i>	Details in Autumn Newsletter
Tuesday 11 November	<i>Armistice Day Ceremony</i>	Ditto

Welfare

Nick Launders writes: “In the last issue of the News Letter I mentioned the reorganisation of the Legion and a whole range of voluntary roles. The Legion's Website (www.britishlegion.org.uk)* is the primary source of information on all its activities and policies. If you are unable to use the website then the **help line 0808 802 8080** is open from 8am until 8pm for seven days a week; the Team are prepared to answer any question you may have, not just welfare. The Legion has a great deal to offer to the 15% of our population who have served in the Armed Forces or are a close relative of those who have. The main challenge facing us is to identify those who are in need in our area. Many ex-service personnel and their families do not want ‘charity’, however their dependants often have to shoulder the whole load. The Legion is trying to reach out to these people. At a local level we are investigating ways and means of improving networking with other charities and the social services to reach more of those who are still ‘under the radar’. Having a healthy curiosity and maintaining good relationships with our friends and neighbours might help us to lend a helping hand before a problem develops into a crisis.

PS One final thought, the World Wide Web is accessible from any public library. The service is free and the librarians will show you the ropes!

- More information is available on the RBL website; the following link might be helpful:
<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/aboutus/thelegion-nearyou/inthemidlands>.
- If anyone would like more information on the subject of “volunteering opportunities”.
Please contact Nick Launders (01491) 628243; nicklaunders@gmail.com

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Poppy Appeal & Events

Although there have been no specific fund raising events for the Poppy Appeal this quarter, there have been some very generous individual donations and collections in favour of the Poppy Appeal at the funerals of Mrs Angela Hall and Mr William Gittings.

We have been actively promoting the planting of poppy seeds around Henley to bloom to commemorate the centenary of the start of World War One in August. These have been generously donated by Toad Hall Garden Centre and Aliquando choir and have raised further funds. We are now well on our way to exceeding last years' record total."

Saturday 1 November - *Henley Concert Singers Concert for Poppy Appeal*

Henley Concert Singers are putting on a concert in Rotherfield Grey's Village Hall for the RBL Poppy Appeal. **NB** – The RBL have been asked to provide some finger food/ canapés for; this event. We are therefore looking for a number of eager volunteers from our Branch to oblige. Further information will be available in the next Newsletter – in the meantime put it in your diary!

Saturday 8 November - *Aliquando Choir singing for the Poppy Appeal*

You know from the last newsletter that this will be an extremely special and moving event featuring the premiere of a specially commissioned work for Henley and the wider community, in the presence of special guests and Peter and Elisabeth Owen. Peter is the nephew of Wilfred Owen and will read one of his uncle's most famous poems. The programme includes Cherubini's Requiem in C Minor, Patrick Hawes new commission "I know the music" of Wilfred Owen's poem and Elgar's Nimrod which has been very beautifully arranged for full choir. We would strongly urge members to support this event and urge friends and family to book early to secure seats.

Reserved seating £25 – 01491 578238 & Non-reserved seats £20 – 07935755905

Previous Events Report

"Resting but always ready" and good to note he had done his shopping first!



This idea of replicating an incident recounted in one of his father's letters (below) written during WW1, led John to prostrate himself on a double bed (or which read 4 poster) in the window of a shop 'Lots of Living' in Henley to draw attention to the commemorative events that are happening in and around Henley this year and additionally to launch the sale of tickets for Aliquando's concert for the Poppy Appeal on 8 November . It did draw a lot of attention and good natured banter, whilst providing a poignant reminder 'lest we forget'.

"On the night of 26th we moved to Roucy. We were allowed to sleep but had orders to keep our equipment on and the men to leave their arms through the slings of their rifles" - "I was lucky. I found a big 4 poster bed in a house in Roucy where I slept with all of my equipment"

Sgt W L Green MM
1st 8th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters

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The Royal British Legion and the Centenary Commemorations

A flavour of what events the RBL are planning through 2014 to 2018

*'To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high'*

The Centenary provides the nation with an opportunity to honour the commemoration of the First World War and acknowledge The Royal British Legion and the red poppy, as the charity and symbol of Remembrance and hope with relevance for today and the future.

The Centenary gives the Legion the opportunity to re-engage with our supporters, as well as moving forward to reach the next generation.

We want to use this time to reinvigorate ourselves. It is important for us to remind the public of our purpose: to help members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army and Royal Air Force, Reservists, veterans and their families all year round.

Our mission – to be the number one provider of welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance for the whole Armed Forces community – remains as vital now as it was following the First World War.

Inspired to organise your own event?

We know that many projects will need funding to help them get started. We encourage you to investigate the grants available from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) who have money earmarked for community Centenary projects. They want to fund projects that help communities understand more about the heritage of the First World War and that will benefit a wide range of people.

To find out more about the HLF grants and your eligibility visit **www.hlf.org.uk**, call their grant enquiry line on **020 7591 6024** or email them at enquiries@hlf.org.uk

They're particularly keen to support initiatives that have community, educational, youth or legacy elements.

Success Stories

Leiston Branch The Legion's Leiston Branch received a £9,200 grant from the HLF for the community project they are running with other local groups. The branch is working with local museums, youth and cadet groups, historical societies and regimental associations to organise four months of events chronicling the town's wartime history, culminating in the annual Festival of Remembrance in November.

National Funding The Legion has applied for funding from the HLF to enable us to send a pack of poppy seeds and Remembrance heritage information to schools throughout the UK, as well as funding a full time Ambassador Training Co-ordinator for a year. The seeds will be sent out in early April, supported by Prime Minister David Cameron, the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport and devolved administrations. The new Co-ordinator role, focused on Remembrance, will support training activities for over 500 Legion volunteer ambassadors who will represent the Legion to a wide range of communities across the UK, including schools and youth groups.

Poppies in the Moat On 5th August an installation of almost 900,000 ceramic poppies will be unveiled in the moat at the historic Tower of London. The poppies will be available for sale throughout the installation, with proceeds going to military charities.

Learning Pack The Legion's award-winning, and free, Learning Pack goes out to 50,000 schools in June 2014. The pack will contain a wide range of resources about the First World War, including assembly outlines, poems, activities, and video content.

Centenary Gardens Ashridge Trees in Somerset will be growing trees, rosebushes and other plants to raise money for the Legion, providing the opportunity to plant something beautiful.

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Hear My Cry – Words for When There Are No Words The Bible Society has published a collection of poems, psalms and drawings inspired by the Centenary. Proceeds will be donated to the Legion and a copy of the book will be sent to each of the Legion's branches.

The Centenary Album The Legion and Decca Records, are producing an album of First World War themed poetry and music, featuring well known personalities, descendants of WW1 VCs and the Central Band of The Royal British Legion.

Honour Events The Legion is organising a variety of community events around the country, including sponsored walks, bike rides and swims.

The Book of the Poppy This book brings to life the symbol of the poppy and the vital work of The Royal British Legion and features a foreword from the Legion's National President, Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CB CVO.

Booking information regarding the Battle of Britain Thanksgiving Service

The Ministry of Defence announces that the 74th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication will be held in Westminster Abbey at 11.00 am on Sunday 21 September 2014

Applications for tickets, stating all names, addresses, place and date of birth, Passport or Driving Licence number of individuals wishing to attend, should be made in writing and are to be accompanied by a **stamped self-addressed envelope**. Applications should reach Mrs Michele Small SO3 RAF Ceremonial Events, RAF Ceremonial Office, Bentley Priory Building, RAF Northolt, West End Road, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 6NG by the 18th July 2014.

To assist with seating in the Abbey, applicants are requested to state which of the following categories is appropriate; former Battle of Britain aircrew; relative of aircrew who lost their lives in the Battle of Britain or since; past or present members of the Royal Air Forces and its Reserve Forces; members of the Emergency Services or ground support staff during the Battle; or member of the general public.

Please state if you are a wheelchair user.

Tickets and a note on dress and timings for the occasion will be issued 2 weeks before the Service

General Branch Booking Form

Name -----Talk & Lunch - -----

Please reserve----- at £10 each-----

Name - ----- Named Event-----

Please reserve-----at £ -----

NB – Cash on the day please

Send to – Stan Ainsley, Ash Tree Cottage, HoT, RG9 6EZ

Phone - 07935 755905

Email – stanainsley@hotmail.com

Sign.....

Date