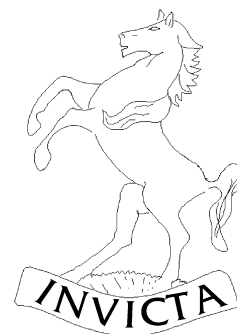




# KENT COUNTY NEWS

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**June 2011**

***BRANCH SECRETARIES: PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ITEMS IN THIS MONTHLY CIRCULAR SHOULD FORM PART OF YOUR REPORT***

## **COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

I thank all who attended the funeral of Reg Carter MM which took place at Barham Crematorium on 4th May.

The concert at Canterbury Cathedral was a great success. I thank all involved in the organisation of the event, and we are now looking forward to the Rochester Cathedral concert in October. Advertising flyers will be available shortly so please help to make this event even more of a success than Canterbury.

Branch Parades at Crockenhill and Sutton Valence went off very well and I thank the Standard Bearers who attended.

National Conference is now history and I thank those Branches that sent delegates. Of course Branches that did not send delegates must accept decisions that were made. You can see all about Conference on the Legion Web Site including the National President's, National Chairman's and Director General's addresses to Conference.

You will all be aware that there are a lot of events going on across the County this year for the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. My wife and I are being invited to many of them and we will endeavour to attend as many as possible. Those I can not attend personally I will send another County Officer to be my representative. Please do not see this as a snub to your Branch, it is just a logistics problem.

*Aussie Walker*

## **DONATIONS TO COUNTY FUNDS**

The following donations have been gratefully received:

- Isle of Oxney Branch - £400
- Mr H Dabin - £5
- Mr Pat Gallagher - £250

## **MEMBERSHIP FORMS**

The MS4 is no longer produced and there are no supplies available from the Poppy Appeal at Aylesford.

The form is replaced by a revamped version of the MEM20 and is currently an interim form that will need to be updated shortly. A copy of the form is enclosed. Completing it is pretty basic and self-explanatory with applicants electing to join either:

- the St James's Branch or another National Branch
- their County Branch
- a local branch / branch and club

If they elect to join the local branch then there is space for the Branch Secretary to sign and date the form before it is sent direct to Head Office - not to this office.

The whole form is geared towards everyone paying by Direct Debit with no allowance for those that wish to pay by cash. I can only suggest that you write 'Cash Payer' on the application and strike through the DD application. For those that pay by DD there is no tick box to say the DD is to take effect immediately or at the start of the next Legion year.

Also there is no receipt for the branch to retain, nor is there a receipt/temporary membership card for the new member. I personally don't like this set-up but I'm sure many out there will be relieved by its simplicity. MEM20s are now available from Aylesford. I would add that the MS4 is still acceptable and they can be used until your stocks run out.

You should also be aware that there are no MS2s on the shelves at Aylesford and it's possible that these will become obsolete as hard copies. I am informed that the MS2, and the MS7, will become available online and they can be submitted by e-mail. However, I have no idea what form they will take nor when they will become available. In the meantime any personal changes concerning members that would normally be made by MS2 should be submitted to me by e-mail or letter if you have no stocks. The most important things to include is the member's full name and membership number before telling me what the change is. If I don't have all the information needed then it will come back to you.

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

At Annual Conference the delegates who attended voted to have the affiliation fee increased by £1 per year for the next six years. This will take effect on 1st October 2011 when the fee will go up to £12. I therefore need to remind you all that those applicants who sign and date their application between 1st July and 30th September will pay £12 and their membership will expire on 30th September 2012. (I am aware that in my e-mail to some branches I stated that members should pay £11 - I was wrong).

There are many who, with some justification, feel aggrieved that they are only getting a few months membership for a full year's subscription. Now is the time when new members should be advised that it may be beneficial to them to either wait until after 1st July, or to post-date their applications which you should then put in the post towards the end of June - MS4s to me and MEM20s to Head Office.

Membership Services will not be ordering and issuing replacement cards after 1st June although exceptional circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, they will be providing "Proof of Membership" should it be required.

Member changes of address, transfers, etc need to be completed by 1st July as there will be no changes made to the database until the beginning of September. This is because the information held on the database needs to go to the printers so they can start preparing the cards for renewal. This would also be a good opportunity for members to elect not to receive multiple magazines at their household.

Membership Services will be sending instructions for Branches and Clubs to change their admin fees within the next two weeks. Responses and updates to the database will need to be completed by this office by no later than 1st July otherwise the rates for the forthcoming year will remain as they are. Please send your forms to me as soon as you get them please, whether there are changes or not. That way I can contact those branches whose returns I don't have in case they have gone astray.

Finally, Membership Services are in the process of reviewing and revising the Branch Membership Guide. There will likely be substantial changes to the Membership process. You will all be kept informed of developments and I welcome any ideas and suggestions you may have. As always, please let me know of any questions and concerns.

### **COUNTY DIRECTORY**

Attached are replacement pages for the County Directory. The changes are to Borstal, Canterbury, Cranbrook, Herene Bay, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Staplehurst, Tonbridge and Woodchurch Branches. Also attached are e-mail contact sheets with amended entries for Shepway and Staplehurst Branches.

Please check that your branch officer details are correct as per the latest edition of the Directory (including the latest amendments). This is to ensure that the membership cards, and also the MS1s and Branch Accounts information, go to right person at the right address. E-mail addresses are highly desirable for easy dissemination of information! Please check your branch contact at the back of the Directory.

### **90TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT - CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL**

As far as Kent County is concerned, the 90th Anniversary Concert at Canterbury Cathedral on 7th May was a great success. The music was provided by the Central Band of the Royal British Legion, under the musical direction of Captain David Cole, and the band was supported by an excellent soprano, Margaret Threadgold. The first half of the programme included familiar music from films and shows and a sing-a-long, plus a selection of Glenn Miller tunes. The second half opened with the moving 'Wootton Bassett'. The Commemoration, including the entry of the Standards, was followed by a 'Last Night at the Proms' section with the 'Fantasia on British Sea Songs' followed by 'Jerusalem' and the rousing 'Land of Hope and Glory' which closed the performance. This final section included plenty of singing, clapping, flag waving and calls for encores from all - including the local dignitaries. The whole programme lasted for two hours plus a 15 minute interval.

Although we only had around 400-450 'bums on seats' out of the 600 central nave seats available, all who attended thoroughly enjoyed an excellent night's entertainment. This included those British and overseas visitors to Canterbury who bought tickets on the night. One Dutch gentleman wasn't sure at first about buying a ticket as it would mean cycling the 20 miles back to his hotel in Dover in the dark. In the end he was glad he witnessed our British eccentricities. Many found it to be, not only an entertaining concert but, in parts, a very moving one too and there were many queries about our second concert at Rochester Cathedral on 1st October.

## **THE GENERAL FUND**

Attached is a copy of the General Fund Budget that was handed to all those attending Annual Conference.

## **BRANCH FUNDS INITIATIVE**

The interest rate of 3.05% for those funds held in the BFI will be extended to March 2012. This is far better than the High Street interest rates and those branches who have not yet deposited excess funds may wish to consider taking advantage of the higher rate.

## **POPPY SHOP**

The following message was received from Joseph Dublin, from Fundraising at Head Office, on 16th May.

“Because of the high demand for the Poppy Shop products all products will be available on-line a few days time (before the end of the week). We are currently building a new website for the Poppy Shop which should be available from beginning of August - in the meantime a temporary website is being used Poppy Shop”

The website is at [www.poppysshop.org.uk](http://www.poppysshop.org.uk) and now includes a few non-90th Anniversary items including Legion badges. Details for ordering are included on the site. The contact telephone number is 0300 123 9110 and because of the high number of telephone requests you are asked to either order on line or to leave a telephone message.

## **BRANCH ACTIVITIES**

The Benenden Branch are hosting a Wine and Cheese Party on Saturday 11th June.

The Greenhithe & Swanscombe Branch is holding a massive extravaganza on Saturday 11th June to celebrate the Legion's 90th Anniversary.

The Ramsgate Branch is holding a number of events over two weekends - 10th-12th and 25th-26th June - to celebrate the 90th Anniversary.

The South Darenth & District Branch will be holding an open day at the Legion Hall on Sunday 31st July.

The Tonbridge Branch will benefit from a musical event in the grounds of Tonbridge Castle following an afternoon Carnival and Fete on Sunday 12th June. Also, on Wednesday 15th June the Branch will be hosting a 90th Anniversary Quiz and the RBL Club.

Please see the attached flyers for further information on all of the above

## **DOWNS BRANCH**

It is with regret that, due to the lack of support, the 90th Anniversary Concert scheduled for Saturday 11th June at St George's Church, Deal has been cancelled.

The Veterans Association of Deal will be holding an Armed Forces Day Parade and Service on Deal seafront at 11am on Sunday 26th June. All Standard Bearers are welcome to attend the muster at 10.30 am at Deal Castle where the parade will form up. It will march to the top of South Street where it will halt for those Standard Bearers and marchers wishing to join the parade there before continuing to Deal Pier where there will be a Remembrance Service.

### **ASHFORD BRANCH**

In June the Chairman, Tony Hall, will be doing a 100 mile walk in Scotland in aid of the Legion and also Help for Heroes. He would be grateful if you could lend him your support in this endeavour for two very worthwhile charities. The Branch has a number of fundraising events between now and November and the public have really been behind them. As an example, Mr Hall attended a fundraising event at Kingsnorth Village Hall where the local people raised the amazing sum of £1,009 in one night – community spirit is alive and well in Ashford Borough. Attached is a sponsorship form for the walk he is undertaking.

### **LEEDS, HOLLINGBOURNE & DISTRICT BRANCH**

On Saturday 24th September 2011 a jazz concert by Jazz Advocats takes place at 7.30pm at Hollingbourne Village Hall (at the rear of the Windmill pub in Eyhorne Street). Tickets are £10.00 each - bring your own drink and supper. At the same venue on Tuesday 4th October at 8.00pm there will be a talk by Steve Pendleton of St Dunstons. Further details to follow.

### **SUTTON VALENCE BRANCH**

On behalf of the Sutton Valence & District Branch I would like to thank the County Chairman, the Ceremonial Party, the Chairman of the Women's Section and all Branch Standard Bearers that gave their time to attend and make our 90th Anniversary Parade on 15th May, along with the Combined Cadet Force, the Scout Group and others attending, a great success. Thank you all.

*Stan Heather* (Chairman)

### **COUNTY PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

The County PRO, Mac Wilkinson, is willing to attend Branch events anywhere in the county to take photographs and report on the event at no cost. He only asks that the branch pays his travel expenses. He can be contacted on 01843 582283 or by e-mail at [boxcar@btinternet.com](mailto:boxcar@btinternet.com).

### **'WHO IS THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR?'**

During Annual Conference, following the request of several delegates, the National Chairman agreed to distribute the attached poem which was read out by the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion.

### **RALLY FOR REMEMBRANCE CHALLENGE**

In the April News I reported that Simon Angel MBE was tackling the 874 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End on a mobility scooter. I'm pleased to report that he successfully completed the journey raising nearly £10,000 in aid of The Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes. Please see the attached news sheet for more information on this incredible journey.



## **VC GRAVES BLESSED**

On Thursday 14th April 2011 at the cemetery in Cheriton, a rededication and blessing service took place at the recently refurbished graves of two Victoria Cross holders; Sir John Edmund Commerell VC, GCB, later Admiral of the Fleet, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1855 for gallantry in the face of the enemy when he was a Royal Navy Commander in the Crimean War, and Capt William Alexander Kerr VC who received the honour for his actions in Kolapore, India in 1857.

In January 2010 at a meeting of the Cheriton & Morehall Branch, member Ian Loftus advised those present about the sad state of the two graves. The branch decided that they would try and raise funds to have the graves refurbished back to pristine condition and in a short time, with the help of Lord Howard who was the MP for Folkestone and Hythe, Ian had been able to raise the funds required - about £3,400 - and he set about having the work carried out. After much work branch member Tim Geere was eventually successful in tracing via the internet Sue Littlewood, the great, great granddaughter of the Admiral, whilst Ian was able to trace distant relatives of Captain Kerr.

After months of waiting for the weather to be right for the stonemason to carry out the work, it was finally completed mid February. The date was set for the rededication service and on the day the weather held out and approximately 65 people attended the ceremony. The service was conducted by the Branch Chaplain Stephen Brown and Shorncliffe based Steven Franklin of the Royal Army Chaplains Department.

The event was attended by Lord Howard of Lympne QC, Damian Collins MP for Folkestone and Hythe, Commodore Tim Hennessey Royal Navy, Major Tristan Kemp RA Chief of Staff 2 (South East) Brigade, Austin Walker, Kent County Chairman RBL and many others. A bugler from the TA Band of the PWRR played the Last Post and Pipe Major Debbie Jones, Folkestone Pipe Band, played a Piper's Lament at the end of the ceremony. Standards from Cheriton and Morehall, Brabourne and Smeeth and Elham RBL and the Burma Star Association were on parade. Afterwards everybody retired to the Folkestone Bowls Club for a buffet.



Ian Loftus with Sue Littlewood



L to R: Rosemary Wilson, Andrew Kerr late 17/21st Lancers, Georgina Style and James Kerr late Coldstream Guards.

## **MEDAL CASES**

Guardian Cases of Southampton are offering hand made metal medal cases. Please see the attached flyer for further information.

## **90TH ANNIVERSARY - PHOTOGRAPHER**

Need a Photographer to capture your 90<sup>th</sup> events? We have been approached by a gentleman who has kindly offered to attend events to take photographs for you. His name is David Salmon, and this is what he is offering:

“I am an amateur photographer living in Tunbridge Wells and I would be happy to offer my time to take photographs for the Royal British Legion. Is this something you would be interested in? I'm currently a volunteer photographer for the National Trust and Commonwork, and I'm looking to expand into other types of photography such as events and portraits.”

David works full time and has said that weekends and West Kent locations are most suitable for him. If you are interested in taking David up on his kind offer, please contact me on 01622 722292 or at [csaunders@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:csaunders@britishlegion.org.uk) with details of your event and I will ask David if he can help you out.

*Clare Saunders*

## **FLORIADE 2012 - HOLLAND**

Floriade is the world's best known international horticultural exposition, held only once every 10 years. Next year, Floriade 2012 will be staged at Venlo in the Limburg Region of southern Holland from 5 April until 7 October. An estimated 2 million visitors will experience a feast for the senses. The huge site will feature pavilions, plants, trees, vegetables, flowers, themed show gardens, the latest horticultural technology and a diverse cultural programme with music, dance and art from around the world. More details can be found on the Floriade website at [www.floriade.com](http://www.floriade.com).

If a group of your British Legion members are interested in visiting Floriade 2012, contact us now. We operated scores of successful tours to the last Floriade event in 2002 and we are aiming to repeat this success in 2012. We have a range of tours based at carefully chosen hotels in prime locations including Venlo, Eindhoven, s'Hertogenbosch and Valkenburg. We can offer you great deals and all our itineraries can be tailored to you own requirements.

Attached is a flyer giving a preview of just a few of the Floriade 2012 package tours that we are offering. Floriade is of course an amazing event in itself but, depending on the dates of travel, it can be combined with other events such as the Carpet of Flowers in Brussels (mid August), Floralia in Meise (late April) or the Dutch Bulb Fields (April to early May). The tours shown in the flyer are just suggestions and if necessary can be modified to include these events. It would also be possible to include visits to some of the many military memorials, cemeteries, museums and battlefields in the surrounding area. For more information, please contact us today free of charge on 0800 358 4466 or e-mail [info@group-travel.com](mailto:info@group-travel.com).

**Stuart Nicholls**

Business Development Manager

Norman Allen Group Travel Ltd, Portfield House, Daws Road, Hereford HR1 2JJ  
(ABTA W9928, ATOL 3683) Web site [www.group-travel.com](http://www.group-travel.com)

*Tony West*

County Secretary

Email: [twest@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:twest@britishlegion.org.uk)

**Overleaf - Lest We Forget**



## LEST WE FORGET

Notification has been received that the following members have passed on:

Mr Roger Tyack	Downs Branch
Mr Frederick Chamberlain	Dymchurch Branch
Mr Anthony Jenkins	Gillingham Branch
Mr Peter Manktelow	Hawkhurst Branch
Mr David Sanford	Margate Branch
Mr Terry Bryant	Minster & Monkton Branch
Mr Dennis Gisby	Ramsgate Branch
Mr Tony Breden	Shoreham Branch
Mr Donald Marriott	Tonbridge Branch



*Our deepest sympathies go to their families and friends*

