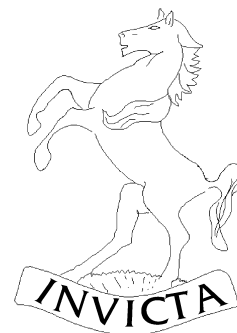




KENT COUNTY NEWS

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July 2011

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

COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

I am obliged to inform you that Mr Damion Coleman is no longer the County Vice Chairman. I will therefore be seeking nominations for a replacement to be elected at the County Conference in January.

The Garrison Church at Brompton was packed for the funeral of Jean, wife of past County Treasurer Ron Lamb. Jean was very involved in everything to do with Gillingham Club and was known locally as 'The Poppy Lady' for her high profile during Remembrancetide. Jean was also a leading light in organising pilgrimages abroad for those in the County, along with Ron and Peter and Jean Cooper. She will be sorely missed.

I attended the Veterans Day Parade at Deal on the 26th June with the County Standard.

I am pleased to see the array of events Branches are putting on as part of the 90th Anniversary. I wish you all well in your endeavours. I attended a Charity Cricket Match at Dartford, arranged by the local MP in support of the 90th Anniversary. A good event except for the weather.

The Poppy Walk on Sunday 5th June at Maurice House went well. I must admit I was very disappointed that none of the Branches in Thanet were represented, with no local Cadets there. I'd like to thank those branches that were represented:- Elham Valley, Shoreham, Sittingbourne & Milton Regis, Smarden, Tonbridge, Whitstable and the Folkstone Marine Cadets. Members of Swanley, Crockenhill & Hextable Branch were due to come but were involved in an accident on the way down - thankfully no one was hurt.

With Remembrancetide just around the corner we will be getting the usual requests to provide speakers to go to schools and colleges etc. We are creating a register of those who would be willing to visit these and other organisations that request speakers throughout the year. Names to the County Secretary please.

Aussie Walker

DONATIONS TO COUNTY FUNDS

The following donations have been gratefully received:

Marley Ltd - £1,000

RAF Regiment Association - £53

IN MEMORIUM

Donations have been received in memory of:

Mrs Doris Head - £40

COUNTY DIRECTORY

Attached are replacement pages for the County Directory. The changes concern the County Officers, the Chartham Branch, the Paddock Wood Branch and the Shepway & Parkwood Branch. There are also changes to the e-mail contacts at Isle of Oxney Branch and Margate Club.

COUNTY PARADE

This year's County Parade takes place on 7th August at Maidstone's All Saint's Church, Maidstone. Due to the high cost of road closures there will be no formal parade through the town but all Standards and guests should muster in the gardens of the Archbishop's Palace. A good turn out of Standards and Members would be appreciated.

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE - ROYAL ALBERT HALL

As you may be aware, following a motion of urgency at Annual Conference, the plan, recently outlined in the Special Circular for The Festival of Remembrance, for members to purchase their tickets for the evening performance direct from the RAH box office has been withdrawn. Tickets for the evening performance will be issued as before, through the County Office. Application forms have already been sent direct to Branches.

Within the County Standard Bearers attend the Festival according to a rota. The top two are invited to attend along with a reserve. Should those branches be unable to attend then the next on list will be invited. To qualify for this honour both the MS1 and the Branch Accounts must have been received by 31st December 2010. The Branches invited to attend this year are Edenbridge, Leigh & District and Sheerness (reserve).

CENOTAPH CEREMONY

If you have any members wishing to take part in the Annual Service of Remembrance and 'March Past' at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, on Sunday 13th November 2011 please complete the enclosed application. Forms must be returned to the County Office no later than Monday 11th July.

Those taking part in the ex-Service element of the Ceremony must have served in HM Armed Forces or be War Widows/Widowers. If any of your members require a carer for the day (one carer per participant) they must also be in possession of a ticket. Non ex-Service members may apply for tickets to march in the civilian contingent. Please make it clear on the application form what contingent the tickets are for (Ex-Service or Civilian).

Please be aware of the physical demands of the Ceremony which involves standing in Whitehall for at least one hour and then marching for a distance of at least 1½ miles, possibly in inclement weather.

NEW MILEAGE RATES

HMRC have raised the private car mileage rate from 40p to 45p per mile as of 6 April 2011. All volunteers using their own car for Legion business can now claim up to this rate.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

It has been proposed that a Souvenir Booklet might be produced to celebrate 90 years of the Royal British Legion in Kent. As time is short and I do not have any archives to browse it makes the challenge a little difficult. However, with help from Branches and individuals who may have stories, pictures or have knowledge of our history this task will be made that much easier. Please contact me 01843 582283 or E-mail boxcar@btinternet.com

Mac Wilkinson

BRANCH FUNDS INITIATIVE

Please note that with immediate effect Head Office has a new fax line designed purposely for submitting BFI withdrawal forms and other BFI related queries. This is designed to isolate the number of faxes received within the Finance department to those relating purely to the Branch Funds Initiative. There is also an email account specifically for BFI correspondence.

The new fax number and branch funds email respectively are as follows;

Fax: 0203 465 9166
email: branchfunds@britishlegion.org.uk

I can send a complete updated set of forms to those that request it. I suggest it would be useful for all treasurers to keep a copy.

MEMBERSHIP FORMS

In my last County News I referred to the MS4 application form being replaced by the green MEM20 and also gave news about the MS2 and MS7. Can I reassure you that, if you still have stocks of MS4s, MS2s and MS7s then please continue to use them as before.

Cheques should continue to come to this office even if a MEM20 is sent to Head Office. I do not need to know which applicant the money is for, only the branch. The branch should record which cheques are for which individual.

For those that would rather use the MS4 I am prepared to photocopy forms and send them to branches but I will send no more than 25 at a time and would expect to see sufficient numbers of completed forms come back to me before sending out a new batch. Please bear in mind that the receipts at page 3 will not be perforated so ensure you have a pair of scissors.

Forms MS2 and MS7 have now been created in PDF format. The forms can be completed electronically but must be printed and posted in the normal way. They cannot be e-mailed to County Office nor can completed forms be held electronically. Please e-mail me, or get your Membership Secretary to e-mail me and I will send an electronic version of each form.

Could I ask that your envelopes include 'The County Secretary' rather than just the County Office address so that your letters come to the right person. It helps to prevent mail going astray.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

For DDSP we are currently 18th in the National table with 36.7% of our members signed up to pay their subscriptions by direct debit. Please do all you can to ensure new members pay by direct debit and to encourage existing cash members to convert.

We are sitting in 17th place for Gift Aid with 50.11% having broken through the 50% barrier. Well done and thank you.

Gift Aid does not cost your members anything and, providing they are UK tax payers, all they have to do is tick the Gift Aid box on their applications or on the backing sheet they receive with their new/replacement membership cards. The Legion can then claim the tax back from the Government at 28p for every £1 of the affiliation fee - that's £3.36 for the new fee. A thought for you - if every member who could had signed up to Gift Aid there would have been no need for the Affiliation Fee to have risen this year.

Before handing over the cards to your cash members this year make sure you get them to tick the box, if they are eligible to do so, and send the certificate on their behalf.

WELFARE

The Housebound and Hospital Visitors course held in May was attended by just seven people. We really need more people, particularly Branch Welfare Representatives, to come forward to do this worthwhile job. For more information please contact Emily Asseter on 01622 722292 or Mac Wilkinson on 01843 582283 or e-mail to boxcar@btinternet.com.

BRANCH ACTIVITIES

The Birchington Branch is holding a Summer Fayre on 9th July.

The Maidstone Branch is holding a Michael Buble Tribute Night and Dinner and Dance on 11th November.

Please see the attached flyers for further information on the above.

ASHFORD BRANCH

The branch had a successful fundraiser on 10th and 11th June in Ashford Town Centre and we raised the sum of £1,300.



DOWNS BRANCH

The Downs Branch held their Annual Poppy Walk on Sunday 19th June. We had 21 walkers, including the County PAO, who raised £2,180.58 for the Poppy Appeal whilst enjoying the walk in glorious sunshine. One lady raised £257 in just four days. Well done everyone.

BIRCHINGTON BRANCH

The Birchington Branch will be holding a special fundraising day on 27th August to celebrate the 90th Anniversary. The event will take place at Minnis Bay, Birchington from 1000hrs to 1800hrs. The programme will include:

- The Birchington Branch will be organising Tombola, craft and other attractive and interesting stands.
- The Royal Regiment of Wales Support Team will provide a recruitment and weapons stand and the Regimental Free Fall team will close the event at 1745hrs with their exciting display.
- Margate Sea Cadets will be present with merchandising, displays and an information stand.
- 438 (Thanet) Squadron Air Cadets will have a display of activities and their band will also be putting on a performance.
- An aerobatic display will take place adjacent to the site over the sea, generously sponsored by Infratil, Manston Airport.
- The Owl Sanctuary will have a stand with details of their work.
- Miniature steam train rides for children, a funfair and “Water Walkers”
- In the evening the Minnis Restaurant will have a live band and barbecue

This event starts a three day programme at Minnis Bay but proceeds from this day will be for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

If any Branch wishes to participate by having a pitch on this day, they should contact either the Chairman on 01843-846458 or the Vice Chairman on 0184-843334. Pitches cost £15 for one day or £30 for the complete weekend.

FAVERSHAM BRANCH

Wednesday 8th. June and a very early start. Yes, the members of the Faversham Branch were at it again. Another trip across the channel. We were joined by Jerry Ferrett, President of the Canterbury Branch together with their Standard Bearer, John Marsh, and Roger Townsend, the Standard Bearer of the Brabourne and Smeeth branch. This time, we travelled down to the new Commonwealth War Cemetery at Fromelles. This beautifully presented site is the location of one of the Somme's diversionary battles in which there were over 7000 Australian and British casualties and not one foot of ground taken. At Fomelles we held a very moving Service of Remembrance, conducted by the Rev. James Pettit who was deputising for our own Padre. The Faversham Standard was carried by Tom Van Soest. He was joined by the Canterbury, Brabourne and Smeeth Standards and the Canterbury branch of the Royal Marines Association carried by John Parker. The calls were beautifully sounded by our branch trumpeter Roger Ely. Our President Tom Gates laid a wreath. It was the first time Padre James had conducted such a service and he was quite moved by it. We moved on to Armentieres for a look around and some lunch and then it was on to Ypres for the Last-Post ceremony at the Menin Gate. For the ceremony, our four Standards were joined by that of the Epping and District Branch. Our President laid a wreath and our Chairman Steve Patterson was given the privilege of delivering the Exhortation. After the ceremony, it was back to Calais for the ferry home after a long but very rewarding day. Thanks must go to Alma Huntley who organized the outing. The next trip will be announced in the not-too-distant future.

LAMBERHURST & BAYHAM BRANCH

The Lamberhurst & Bayham Branch are having an evening of entertainment, supported by the Lamberhurst Pantomime Society, to include a fish and chip supper to celebrate the 90th Year of the RBL. This is taking place on the 16th July in the Memorial Hall, Lamberhurst.

VISIT OF FRENCH STUDENTS

Mac Wilkinson, County Benevolence Office and County Public Relations Officer recently gave a talk to a number of French students who were in the County for a week. He met them at Hartsdown College in Margate and introduced them to the work of the Legion.



Royal British Legion

A GRAPHIC picture of life in wartime Britain fascinated French students on a trip to Margate.

The party of 25 teenagers from the Nord Pas de Calais region heard about rationing, air raid precautions, community spirit and the need to remember those who had given their lives in defence of their country.

Mac Wilkinson, from the Royal British Legion, was the guest speaker who talked to the French visitors and students at

the event hosted by Hartsdown Technology College.

The visitors were also shown gas masks and other breathing apparatus used as safety measures during air raids, and were given news articles from the period to see how the war was reported.

The French group chatted with Hartsdown students in the college canteen over lunch and also heard a presentation about the London Olympics in 2012 given by student sports ambassador Kerry Boyd.

The idea behind the week-long visit to Kent was to gather information and photographs for a youth magazine called 123. Yes that the French youngsters will prepare with the theme wartime Britain and the work of the Royal British Legion.

Mr Wilkinson from the RBL said: "They were a very respectful and attentive group.

"It is important that young people know about the impact of war and remember those who have fallen in conflict."

BURSARY SCHEME FOR JOURNEYS OF REMEMBRANCE

The Legion has introduced a new bursary scheme which will give financial assistance to people wishing to visit places in which their close relatives served in WW1 and WW2. The bursary is means tested and the amount awarded ranges from £250 per person to £750 per person, dependant on the cost of the tour. Bursaries will go towards the cost of one of Poppy Travel's 'Journeys of Remembrance' tours, operated in conjunction with Leger Holidays.

Details of the tours available can be found on www.poppy-travel.com or by requesting a brochure on 0844 686 2282. There are four places available on each date, and we anticipate demand will be high, so call Poppy Travel to secure your place on 01622 716729. Proof of eligibility will be required.

POPPY TRAVEL

Journeys of Remembrance

Our tours are now being operated by Leger Holidays, but please be assured that Poppy Travel are still devising the itineraries, providing the support group and organising the Remembrance aspects of the tours, so our usual high standards will be maintained. We have also introduced a *bursary scheme* to provide financial assistance or those with relatives in the areas in which we visit on our Journeys of Remembrance. To order a brochure please call Leger Holidays on 0844 686 2443 or visit: www.poppy-travel.com

Tailor Made Journeys of Remembrance

If you wish to travel as a group and create your own itinerary we can make the arrangements for you. You tell us where and when you want to go, and we can tailor make the tour, providing guides, medics and standard bearers as required. If you have veterans who qualify for *Heroes Return* grants, why not base your tour around those areas? Call us to discuss your requirements or for a no obligation quote on 01622 716729.

Tours for Schools & Young People

Poppy Travel for Schools & Young People offer bursary assisted guided educational tours for schools, cadets, and informal education groups to sites of historical and commemorative importance both in the UK and overseas. The tours support schools and young people as they start to understand and participate in Remembrance, and learn about people whose lives are affected by conflict. Working with The Royal British Legion's Learning Programme, itineraries are designed to reflect the aims and interests of the group. All tours meet the needs of the National curriculum. For more information call the Schools team on 0845 602 2482 or visit: www.poppytravelschools.org.uk

If you would like more information on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Poppy Travel in 01622 716729.

Tony West

County Secretary

Email: twest@britishlegion.org.uk

Overleaf - **Lest We Forget**



LEST WE FORGET

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

Mr Tom Staines	Cheriton & Morehall Branch
Mr Jim Sylvester	“
Mrs Ruth Peters	Dymchurch & District Branch
Mr Harvey Barlow	Goudhurst Branch
Mr John Ades	Hawkhurst Branch
Mr Les Ashman	Hythe & Saltwood Branch
Mr Trevor Canning	“
Mrs Janice Dunning	“
Mrs Prudence Todd	“
Mr Wilfred Todd	“
Mr Terence McParland	Ramsgate Branch
Mr Henry Sandford	Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch
Mr Ralph Nevis	Shepway & Parkwood Branch
Mr Philip Frankland	Sutton Valence Branch - Vice President
Mr Alan Rendell	“
Mr Peter Rose	Swanley, Crockenhill & Hextable Branch
Mr Kenneth Setford	Whitstable Branch
Miss Kate Saunders	Maidstone WS Branch Chairman



Our deepest sympathies go to their families and friends

