

The Royal British Legion
The Royal County of Berkshire
and Vale of White Horse

COUNTY CIRCULAR

SEPTEMBER 2017

BRANCH SECRETARIES:

Please bring these items to your members' attention and display this circular where your members can read it.

70 @ 70

As I mentioned at this year's County Conference, to celebrate a significant birthday I intend to walk from Datchet to Hungerford via the Vale of White Horse in aid of the Poppy Appeal. Unfortunately a few health issues have prevented me from doing this in a straight six-day burst but I intend to carry out the walk during late September and October but not on consecutive days. If you would like to sponsor me please use the form attached, which can be copied as often as required. Branch Secretaries and Poppy Appeal Organisers: I would be grateful if you would inform as many members, friends, relatives etc. as possible as I hope to raise a four-figure sum in the process. Anyone wishing to walk with me please contact me (see the poster attached) although I don't have a firm schedule yet as weather, meetings and appointments will influence my decisions as to when to walk.

David Drew
County President and Poppy Appeal Coordinator

ANNUAL CONFERENCE BELFAST 2018

Tilehurst Branch are organising a coach to take Berkshire representatives to the Annual Conference in Belfast in May 2018. The coach is already booked and a block booking for accommodation at the Premier Inn, Alfred Street, Belfast has been secured. Although primarily aimed at delegates and Standard Bearers from the County, all visitors to the conference are offered the chance of a seat on the coach and pre-booked accommodation.

Delegates and Standard Bearers/National Parade Marshall's team and their spouse/partner/dependants will be given priority.

The coach will depart on Thursday 17 May 2018 and return on Monday 21 May 2018 to allow for those taking part and officiating in the Standard Bearers competition on Friday 18 May.

Full details and a booking form are attached.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Branch Accounts are gradually arriving at the County Office and the have been received from: Abingdon, Arborfield, Crowthorne, Cumnor, Holyport, Thatcham, Faringdon and Winnersh. Accounts are only deemed complete if the bank statement for 30 June 2017 and the Authority to Disclose Letter are attached. Please try to send the accounts well before the deadline so if anything is missing or incorrect there is time to get this sorted out before 30 September.

BRANCH COMPLIANCE

Branch AGM's will be due in October and November. Branches are reminded that there must be four separate people holding the main Officer roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

In addition to the Branch Officers there must be a minimum of three Committee members. The Branch Committee must also appoint a Branch Community Support Representative (formerly Welfare Officer).

MS1 BRANCH INFORMATION AND MS1B STANDARD BEARER DISCLAIMER FORMS 2017

The new MS1 Branch Information and MS1B Standard Bearer Disclaimer forms for 2017 are enclosed. Please ensure these versions of the form are used (MEM6105 – V2.0 – July 2017 and MEM6107-V2.0-June2017).

Both these forms must be sent to the MSO so receipt can be recorded. The MSO will pass the Standard Bearer forms to the County Ceremonial Officer for counter signature.

The deadline for receipt of both forms is 31 December 2017.

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE ALBERT HALL

All applications from Branch for tickets to the evening performance have been accepted. Tickets will be sent direct to the people named on the application.

STANDARD BEARERS COMPETITION 17 SEPTEMBER

The Berkshire RBL, Youth and REL Women's Section Standard Bearers competitions are being held on Sunday 17 September at the Tilehurst RBL Club. The competitions start at 2.30pm. Spectators are most welcome and requested to be seated by 2.15pm.

BERKSHIRE POPPY LAUNCH AND ARMED FORCES RACEDAY 28 OCTOBER

The Berkshire Poppy Launch and Armed Forces Race day is on 28 October at Newbury Racecourse. There will be military theme to the day, a guest of honour to launch the appeal & two complimentary tickets for the race day for RBL members, serving and ex-Service personnel.

To order your two free tickets telephone the racecourse on 01635 40015 and quote your RBL membership number or military ID.

COUNTY FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE 4 NOVEMBER 2017

The County Festival of Remembrance is on Saturday 4 November at Waingels College, Woodley. Tickets are £12.00 each. Cheques payable to Berkshire County RBL and to be sent to the RBL County Office, Eversley Road, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9PR.

COUNTY CONFERENCE 20 JANUARY 2018

The County Conference will be held on Saturday 20 January 2018 at the Cippenham RBL Club, Brook Path, Cippenham SL1 5EJ.

The conference pack with details of the conference and the necessary forms for nominations to County Committee, Motions, Delegates and lunch orders will be sent out by post to Branch Secretaries mid September.

ARBORFIELD POPPY DANCE 14 OCTOBER

Arborfield Branch invites members from all branches to their Poppy Appeal Dance and Supper on 14 October, 7.30pm to 11.30pm. Tickets are £12.00 each, admission by ticket only. Tickets can be purchase from Arborfield RBL Club bar staff tel 0118 9760360 or from J Cornish tel. 0118 9760432. A leaflet is enclosed.

COMPTON POPPY APPEAL LUNCH AND TALK 14 OCTOBER

This fund raising event in aid of the Poppy Appeal will take place at the Compton Swan on Saturday 14th October 12.15 for 1pm. Our guest speaker will be Major General Dair Farrar Hockley who was commissioned into The Parachute Regiment in 1967 and had a full and eventful career culminating in his command of the army's 2nd Division from which he retired in 1999. During the Falklands War, as Officer Commanding A Company 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment he fought at the battles of Goose Green and Wireless Ridge and also led the heli-borne assault to secure Bluff Cove - a crucial first step in developing a southern flank in the battle for Port Stanley - he was awarded the Military Cross. He is currently a senior fellow at The Institute for Statecraft; a patron of The Second World War Experience Centre and a trustee of Holy Trinity Monastery. The title of Dair's talk will be "Defence of the Realm - then (1982) and now"

Tickets, for a two course lunch and table wine, are £17.50 per head. If you would like to attend this event please contact one of the undersigned. Steve Allison tel 07812 991013 email steveallison1888@aol.com or David Norbury TD, tel 07770 326128 email davidnorbury@btinternet.com

OFFICE 365, MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION PORTAL AND BRANCH COMMUNITY SUPPORT

All Branch officers, up to three Committee members and the Membership Secretary can be provided with an email address/login that is branch and role specific to use and gain access to Office 365 and the Membership Administration Portal. The address takes the form of Branch Branchname.role@RBL.Community (e.g. Abingdon.Chairman@RBL.Community). All Branches have had these addresses allocated but not all Branches have made use of them. Where there has been a change of officer the same address is used but a new password is required. Please contact the MSO to have the password re-set or to start using Office 365.

The Membership Administration Portal is a place to store branch documents and share information between the branch officers. In MAP the Branch Officers and Membership Secretary (not committee) can access membership listings, such as current members and members with payments outstanding.

Also on the Office 365 site is access to the Legion Online Membership Accounts System (LOMAS) for those Branch Treasurers who have attended training. Access to use LOMAS is completed at the end of the training session.

Branch Community Support is also now accessible direct through this site. One of the current Branch Officers or Committee who use the Office 365 site with an RBL login can register the Branch or it can be registered through the MSO. The Branch Welfare Representative will then be given access.

The login ID is an email address which is very useful for any advertising as this can be used instead of personal addresses. These addresses also help internally to identify the role of the sender, particularly with head office who will not know all the Branch Committee members. If required, users can set up Office 365 to forward any messages onto their personal email so they do not have to check two accounts.

FARINGDON BRANCH COMMEMORATIVE BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE SERVICE

The following article was published in the Oxford Mail on 30 July

Veterans gathered at a church near Faringdon to remember soldiers who lost their lives in the Battle of Passchendaele.

While ceremonies have been taking place at the Menin Gate in Ypres, to mark the centenary of the start of the battle in Belgium, people in Oxfordshire have also been paying their respects to the fallen.

Today (30 July) members of the **Royal British Legion's** Faringdon and District branch gathered at St Faith's Church in Shellingford for a special ceremony.



RBL branch secretary Jan van Andel said: "It's right that we should take time to remember the soldiers who lost their lives in the battle.

"Twenty men from Faringdon and the surrounding area who lost their lives at Passchendaele.

"Five of them were from Shellingford -that would have had a big impact on the village."

After a bugler played The Last Post the names of the fallen from Shellingford were read out.

SEAT UNVEILED TO COMMEMORATE THE BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE.

Didcot Branch attended a ceremony at the War Memorial Site in Smallbone Recreation Ground, Didcot where the Mayor unveiled a seat to commemorate the Battle of Passchendaele. Children from the local primary school attended and read letters and poems from servicemen to their loved ones at home which was very emotional. Last year a seat was installed at the site to commemorate the Battle of Jutland and the Somme



LEGION MEMBER HONOURED WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY AWARD

Keith Hughes, Didcot Branch was awarded the John Eldridge Award for Voluntary Service to the recognise his work for the Didcot RBL Branch over the last 23 years and his 10 years as a Poppy Appeal Organiser. Unfortunately Keith was unable to attend the ceremony and Roger Hunt collected the award on his behalf.



SPECIAL DAY: Mayor Jackie Billington with Jean Eldridge and poppy appeal volunteer Roger Hunt, who collected Ken Hughes's award

(photo published in the Herealdseries newspaper)

COUNTY OFFICE STAFF MATTERS

Michael Lake, our Caseworker is leaving the Legion on 12 September to join the RAF Benevolent Fund as Housing Executive. The County wish him every success in his new job. Michael and his wife also recently added to their family with the birth of their son Teddy.

We are advertising for a replacement to cover the role until Rodger Cartwright returns from his secondment as Area Manager Yorkshire.

The Arborfield Office will be closed on Tuesday 19 September due to an Area Team meeting.

Jennifer Strange will be out of the office on Thursday 14 & Friday 15 September attending a MSO Conference and also on holiday from 9 October returning to work on Tuesday 17 October.

Ann Bethell will be on holiday from 18 September for two weeks returning to work on Tuesday 3 October.

Branch Enclosures

70@70 poster & 70@70 Sponsorship form
Annual Conference details and booking form
MS1 Branch information form & MS1B Standard Bearer Fitness Declaration
Arborfield Poppy Dance

Membership Support Officer:

Jennifer Strange
T: 0118 9762362
E: jstrange@britishlegion.org.uk

Welfare

Ann Bethell & Victoria Gornall-King
Advice & Information Officers
T: 0808 8028080
E: Southeastmidlands@britishlegion.org.uk

Community Fundraiser:

Gaynor Dingley
Tel. 07823 418842
Email: gdingley@britishlegion.org.uk

Regional Clubs Relationship Manager, Midlands

Pauline Swann,
T: 07970 375421
E: pswann@britishlegion.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2017

September	16/17	Berkshire County Show	Newbury Showground
	17	Standard Bearers Competition	Tilehurst RBL Club 10.00am
October	14	Compton Ilsleys & Norreys Branch Luncheon	Compton Swan 12.15pm
		Arborfield Poppy Dance	Arborfield RBL Club 7.15pm
	28	Armed Forces Raceday & County Poppy Appeal Launch	Newbury Racecourse Launch 11.45am tbc
November	4	County Festival of Remembrance	Waingels College, Woodley 7.00pm starts 7.30pm
	11	Armistice Day	
		Festival of Remembrance	Royal Albert Hall
	12	Remembrance Sunday	
		Salvation Army Festival of Remembrance	Anstey Road, Reading 6.15pm

2018

January	20	County Conference	Cippenham RBL Club 11.00am
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Dates of County Committee meetings held at 7.00pm at the County Office, Eversley Road, Arborfield. Reading RB2 9PR

21 September
16 November

If members wish to attend please advise Jennifer Strange, Membership Support Officer
(jstrange@britishlegion.org.uk)