

GREATER LONDON DISTRICT Newsletter September 2014

We will remember them

Pop In, London Area Office



The London Area Team welcomed the public through the doors of the London 'Pop In' Centre on Monday 28 July 2014, as it opened for business to the outside world.

Based at the front of Haig House on Borough High Street - (adjoined to the Legion's Head Office) it is open **10am-4pm, Monday to Friday**. It is one of the first of 16 brand new centres that the Legion will open in major cities across the UK, part of its biggest ever transformation to bring its work closer to the Armed Forces community. An official launch to open the 'Pop In' Centre will take place in early September (by invitation only).

Each centre will offer a welcoming space for Service personnel and veterans to get practical help and advice and for members of the public to find out more about the wide range of services and community activities provided by the Legion. Our free telephone helpline is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week. Call **0808 802 8080** (free from UK landlines and main mobile networks). Or why not drop in and see the new Pop In centre if you are in the area?

In addition, the London Area Office Team is establishing outreach locations for drop-in sessions for beneficiaries to pick up immediate face-to-face support and guidance.

Check out twitter.com/LondonRBL to see when drop-in sessions are operating each day.

WWI Commemoration

Eastenders – 4 August 2014

The BBC1 turned to the Royal British Legion when it came to casting a Standard Bearer and veterans for an authentic scene in which Dot Cotton had organised a WWI Commemoration Service.



Our thespian members from the Greater London District, who were selected to star in the episode broadcast on BBC1 Monday, **4 August at 8pm** for the Remembrance scene were:

- Rob Richier, Greater London District Chairman
- Michael Foster, Greater London District Standard Bearer
- Alan Barley, Branch Chairman, Mitcham
- Mr Bill Davies, President of the Borehamwood Branch
- Max Fuller Parade Marshal Borehamwood Branch and Army Cadet.
- And what a brilliant job they did, well turned out and standing proud, they stood out from the crowd and shone as bright as their medals.

Hopefully stardom will not go to their heads and they will continue with their valuable contribution, volunteering for the Legion and carrying out their duties that make the Legion the fantastic organisation it is. See the gallery of photos at the link below.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/96629202@N06/sets/72157645772990730/>

The BBC donated to the Poppy Appeal as a gesture of gratitude assisting with their request.

Borough Market WWI Commemoration



L-R Penny Bell-Wright, National Chairman John Crisford, Rt. Rev. Michael Ward, Brendan Farrell.

Borough Market in collaboration with Southwark Cathedral held their WWI Commemorative procession and Service on Monday, 28 July 2014, at which RBL Standard Bearers from Richmond and Enfield Branches and Veterans took part.

The RBL National Chairman, in the absence of a Parade Marshal gave the commands for Standard Bearers to follow.

Delicious brownies and cakes were served up with refreshments afterwards in the market itself where the service had taken place. As a thank you to the Legion for making their ceremony extra special, Borough Market are donating a print of their poppy design to the GLD and any proceeds raised from the sale of further prints to the Poppy Appeal. More photos can be viewed at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/96629202@N06/sets/72157645603268530/>

LIGHTS OUT, Million Candles

A large number of events were held across the country, generating a huge amount of public and media interest in the Legion.

The Lights Out event—organised by 14-18 NOW, a cultural programme to mark the centenary—invited everyone in the UK to participate in a shared moment of reflection by turning off their lights from 10-11 pm on 4 August, leaving on a single light or candle, to mark the 100th anniversary of when Great Britain entered the First World War.

Westminster Abbey led the nation on the night, with a First World War vigil liturgy, which was broadcast live on the BBC. Blackpool Tower,

Downing Street, Tower Bridge, the Eden Project in Cornwall, the headquarters of the Football Association and the Imperial War Museums in London and Greater Manchester, were among the buildings which also took part in the event. The Duchess of Cornwall joined senior politicians—including Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and Labour leader Ed Miliband—for the service of solemn commemoration at Westminster Abbey. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince Harry and the Prime Minister David Cameron attended a twilight ceremony at St Symphorien Military Cemetery near Mons, Belgium.

The Legion received wide coverage for the event from all major news services, including the BBC, Daily Mail and Huffington Post. The Legion also received the second highest number of visitors to its website, with the Lights Out page receiving over 113,000 visits—this compares with the Legion's best result of 115,449 on Remembrance Sunday, 10 November 2013. A further 2,833,712 people have seen our Lights Out posts on Facebook and 1,729,878 people have seen our Lights Out on Twitter, where we were trending on the night.

The Lights Out initiative has been a wonderful success for the Legion and was a beautiful and poignant way to mark the centenary of the First World War.

WORLD WAR ONE
AT HOME
BBC **Tour 2014**

Remembrance, the symbolism of the Poppy, its origin and why we wear it today.

The BBC hosted events, across 17 days, with the expectation of around 8,000 visitors a day, offering them the opportunity to understand more about the First World War.

Ann McGrath from Charlton RBL and Ian Tyson from Twickenham RBL were selected to assist the BBC Event in Woolwich on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th June 2014.

Ian and Ann and were made to feel they were a vital part of the BBC development programme and that their input and contribution was of real value in preparing for the BBC for future tours. Ian and Ann were selected for their skills and experience talking to groups and children; this was essential with tasks such as demonstrating to members of the public how to plant poppy

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seeds and how to make a Remembrance Poppy, while also giving short talks on why the poppy is a symbol of Remembrance.

Ian's past experience giving tours at the Poppy Factory came to the fore when he was placed with the children, assembling the Poppy - as some people do in the Poppy Factory, with one hand and/or with their eyes shut - using the wooden assembly blocks that were designed by Major George Howsen MC in the early 1920's. Quite a few adults had a go too.

The BBC fed back to TRBL Assistant Director Marketing & Corporate Communications; the Assistant Director Membership & Armed Forces Engagement, and the Head of Membership - "how well the first event went" and praised Ian and Ann's contribution saying 'Ian and Ann were fabulous!' and said how the poppy making kit Ian brought from the factory was a hit with the children.

Machine Gun Corps – WWI Commemoration

A member of the public in Leicester came to us for assistance to lay a wreath for him in memory of his father, Captain Henry Denham, at the MGC Memorial in Hyde Park.



Above: Captain Henry Denham.

The District was only too happy to fulfill his wishes and decided to turn a simple act of wreath laying into a WWI Remembrance Service. Weather held out on the 11 August 2014, for a fitting tribute in memory of all who served in the Machine Gun Corps and WWI. The Greater London District contingent were honoured to have in attendance Dr David Wright, the MGC Old Comrades Assc. Chairman and their Standard Bearer, Joe Cussons. Bagpipes were playing as

the Standard Bearers formed up; 14 Standards in total were present including the Royal Engineers, making for a splendid display of colours in the summery breeze.



Onlookers took photos and following the Last Post joined in the two-minute silence.

The GLD Chairman, Rob Richier addressed all present and Ken Spowles read the eulogy for Captain Henry Denham. The Blessing was given by District Chaplain, Bishop Michael and Reg Burton was Parade Marshal.



Afterwards, Rob Richier shared out port to thank all the Standard Bearer and to toast The Queen; more port was sipped reflectively as those gathered, listened to WWI Poems. The full gallery of photos can be viewed on flickr at this web link:-

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/96629202@N06/sets/72157646366903185/>

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MGC - Brief history

The Machine Gun Corps, which was formed by Royal warrant on the 14th day of October 1915, when the Monarch, King George V was Colonel-in-Chief. It was formed as a response to the need for more effective use of machine guns on the Western Front in World War I.

The Heavy Branch of the Machine Gun Corps was the first to use tanks in combat, and the branch was subsequently turned into the Tank Corps, later called the Royal Tank Regiment. The MGC saw action in all the main theatres of war, including France, Belgium, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Salonika, East Africa

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and Italy. In its short history the MGC gained an enviable record for heroism as a front line fighting force. Some 170,500 officers and men served in the Machine Gun Corp with 62,049 becoming casualties, including 12,498 killed, earning it the nickname 'the Suicide Club'.

The last unit of the Corps was disbanded on the 15th day of July 1922.

This memorial was originally erected

next to Grosvenor Place, but was dismantled shortly afterwards due to road works. It was rededicated at Hyde Park Corner in 1963.

The Vickers Guns on each side of the Boy David (each have laurel wreaths laid over them) are actual Vickers Guns.



This photo is of Tim Bennett-Goodman's (*Walthamstow new joiner*), grandfather in his cavalry uniform in WWI. He ran away from home in Liverpool to join up aged 16. His parents never forgave him and throughout the war they had no contact with him. Only his Aunt Margery sent him

parcels in the trenches. He later joined the Machine Gun Corp and was mustard gassed.

More information on the MGC

<http://www.1914-1918.net/mgc.htm>

<http://www.machineguncorps.co.uk/> .

Poppy Moat at the Tower of London



See the awesome river of red ceramic poppies sweep around the historic landmark until November 2014. Proceeds from the sale of poppies will go to ex-service charities including The Royal British Legion.

Full details online: <http://poppies.hrp.org.uk/>

A Sight to Behold



Strolling along the embankment at Blackfriars Victoria Docks, you can find moored up the HMS President, painted in the style of a WWI camouflaged 'Dazzle ship'. Alongside is the HQS Wellington, a WWI hospital ship. Both FREE to visit - so why not have a drink on board the deck while watching Thames life bob by.

<http://www.1418now.org.uk/whats-on/dazzle-ships/>

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RAF Museum - Biggles and Chums

26 May 2014 - 4 January 2015

First World War watercolours and works on paper by Captain W.E. Johns and his contemporaries. The Museum's art exhibition will feature works on paper never exhibited before, all of them produced during or immediately after the First World War.

FREE ENTRY

<http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/whats-going-on/events/biggles-and-chums-first-world-war-watercolours-a/>

IN SUPPORT OF Raising funds
1914 for research
THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION **WWI CENTENARY** into the effects
1918 of bomb blast
injuries

<http://www.greatcharity.org/>

Update

The Great Centenary Auction has announced that the first Auction, scheduled for 21 September will now be held in spring 2015.

"The Working Group has a large quantity of consigned donations and the volume is growing" said Col. David James.

"In order to maximise the funds raised for The Royal British Legion Bomb Blast Injuries Research Centre at Imperial College, we are anxious to process as many donations as possible and not to rush the production of the catalogue". We are looking carefully at TRBL Centenary programme in March and April in order to choose a date which does not clash with other events.

The response from Legion members has been brilliant and cartons are being delivered by our sponsors, I-Post, including twenty from a Legion padre in Somerset - his entire library!

"Our main focus now is to appeal to the public for items of value, including jewellery, fine art, old pens etc. We also need collections of postcards, coins and stamps to help us reach our target" Colonel James added.

All correspondence to:

James & Sons Auctioneers, 5 Norwich Street,
Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 9AF.

Tel: 01328 855003.

Normandy Veterans to receive France's Highest Honour

The Government of France wishes to recognise the selfless acts of heroism and determination displayed by all surviving veterans of the Normandy landings, and of the wider campaigns to liberate France in 1944, by awarding them with the Legion d'Honneur. The Legion is working with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to bring to the attention of all D-Day veterans their eligibility for this award.

This recognition extends beyond the troops who actually landed on and fought their way up the beaches 70 years ago, and will include Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel who operated in support of the landings.

Those who are eligible for the award can make their request using this application form. It will be processed by MOD, who will forward the details to the French authorities. The French authorities will then make the final decisions on the awards.

Any veterans wishing to apply for the award (Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur), or anyone enquiring on their behalf should send the form to either:

Personnel and Training - Defence Services
Secretary - Commemorations
Floor 6 Zone C
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
London SW1A 2HB
OR

via email to PersTrg-DSSec-CommemAug1@mod.uk

Neither the Legion nor MOD will be able to give any guidance on timings or the arrangements for the presentation of the awards. Awards will not be given posthumously, and any further questions should be directed to the French authorities.

Public Liability Insurance and clubs

The RBL insurers confirmed that all artists who wish to perform in a club must hold their own Public Liability insurance.



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National Clubs Administration Manager, Peter Lund, confirmed RBL insurance does not cover RBL Clubs as they are not part of the RBL charity and that clubs are responsible to ensure any form of entertainment taking place on club premises for artists to have their own public liability insurance in place to protect the club and its members.

The insurers and club lawyer both confirmed artists performing outside in public places will need specific public liability cover to perform in public or they should not be performing at all.

Race Night @ Eastcote RBL

Saturday 4 October - 8.30 pm

Place your bets on your favoured horses and watch the excitement as the races unfold. Fun night, in support of The Poppy Appeal. **Race card £2.**

Southbourne Gardens, Eastcote, Middlesex HA4 9SQ. Tel 020 8868 1763.

Eastcote Poppy Seeds "bloomin lovely"



Planted as part of the WWI Commemorative Campaign.

Councillor Ashley Kissin, a member of Barkingside Branch has nominated The Royal British Legion as the Charity he will support for his Mayoral year of office 2014-15.

Ashley, for over ten years, has been a Poppy Appeal Collector and will continue during his term of office.

He was awarded his ten-year Long service to the Poppy Appeal certificate in November 2013.

Ashley's father was called up in 1941 into the Leicestershire Regiment (now part of the Anglians). He was transferred into the RASC and was posted out "destination unknown" other than it was somewhere hot as they were issued with khaki drill. He arrived in Durban where after a short stay the convoy was divided, one half going to Singapore and the other half the Middle East, he always felt lucky that his half went to Egypt. Nathan Kissin got his knees brown in the western desert when the troops he was attached to relieved the siege of Tobruk.

In 1942 he was part of the 8th Army that retreated from Tobruk to El Alamein and in October 1942, he took part in the battle of El Alamein.

In 1943 the 8th Army took part in the invasion of Italy and was in Rome when VE Day was declared; he was demobbed in 1946.

Ashley was honoured to lay a wreath on the Cenotaph at the AJEX Parade in November 2012 in memory of those who lost their lives at El Alamein.

Ashley joined the Barkingside Branch in 2012 and they are very proud that he has chosen the RBL as his Charity.

The Mayor will be attending many events during the next eleven months, most of which are fundraisers. The Mayor's Committee will be arranging these "with the Mayor and consorts agreement".

Right: Cllr Kissin at the El Alamein War Memorial.

It is hoped with the 100th WWI Commemoration, this will bring in a healthy revenue stream over the course of the year as well as raising the profile of the Legion.

Freedom of Harrow Parade Saturday 20 September 2014

A parade to celebrate the Freedom of the Borough of Harrow, the Diamond Jubilee of the Borough and to mark the centenary of the First World War will take place on Saturday 20 September 2014.



Borough Coat of Arms
Motto 'SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX' - The well-being of the people is the highest law.

There will be a presentation of awards followed by prayers and a March Past. All Standard Bearers and members are invited to attend. Form up for parade is at 10am. The parade will march off from Gayton Road car park via Station Road to the Civic Centre. The parade will disperse in Milton Road and will be followed by military and other displays in the main car park of the Civic Centre.

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This is a major parade and correct Legion dress code with medals should be adopted.

Ian Fisher Parade - 22 June 2014

The sun shone brightly for the Memorial Service for WO2 Ian Michael Fisher, at The Parish Church of Hornchurch, St Nicholas at Elm Park. Ian had tragically been killed while on active service, in Helmand Province with the 3rd Regiment, The Mercian Regiment on 5 November 2013.



The Parade, led by a band and strong contingent of Legion Standard Bearers, set off from the Elm Park Royal British Legion Branch, followed by clergy, members of Ian's Regiment, local dignitaries; Mayor, counsellors and MP, uniformed youth organisations and the Fire Brigade. The local Police stewarded the road closures and the GLD Marshal, Reg Burton, superbly marshalled the parade.

The service was held at the Parish Church of St Nicholas, conducted by the Rev. Amanda Keighley, the Parish Priest and the preacher, Father Tom Keighley. Our own Chaplain, Bishop Michael, gave the Episcopal Blessing. The service was attended by over 200 and had to be relayed over speakers to those outside the church. The widow of Ian, his two young sons, his mother and sister, and colleagues were in attendance, as well as many veterans and members of the Legion.

Following the church service, the Parade returned to the Elm Park Royal British Legion Branch, the Mayor of Havering and the local clergy taking the salute. The Elm Park RBL was thanked for the sumptuous buffet they provided.

Reminder - GLD Annual London Remembers Parade - 21 September 2014, 2.00pm

The last two years have seen a united Legion in London coming together to Parade and show

members of the public the Royal British Legion is alive and thriving; 'Standing Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve'. 2013 saw a hugely successful Parade, which was very well attended. Please make 2014 as good if not better.

GLD Parade Marshal Recruitment

In January 2015 Reg Burton will sadly be retiring from his post as District Parade Marshal. Until then Reg will fulfill his commitments to the District and oversee the GLD Annual Parade in September. As this will probably be the last major parade Reg commands for the Legion it would be a fitting time to show our appreciation and say thank you to Reg at Richmond club house following the Parade.

The GLD is now recruiting for an incoming Parade Marshal, this is an appointed post decided by the Committee at the first immediate Committee meeting following the AGM. Any willing applicant who is a Standard Bearer or member with the skills, experience and qualities pertaining to this role are requested to express their interest in the role by either email or letter to the Chairman c/o the District Secretary. Any one wishing to undertake the relevant National training in order to undertake the role should also apply to the District Secretary to see when training courses are available.

Branch Closures

2014 to date has seen the official closure of the following branches.

- Edmonton
- West Drayton
- North Finchley
- South West Ham
- Manor Park

Branch Committees

- Please ensure a full committee is elected at the Branch AGM. This must be made up of four elected officials; Branch Chairman,
- Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Branch Secretary; plus 4 other elected members to sit on the Committee. This is stipulated in the Royal Charter for the running and continuance of a Branch.

Membership Dates

Membership Services have entered into this year's Annual Renewal and would like to update you on some upcoming key dates over the next few months:

- **From close of play 17 July to 31 October** - no members can be transferred between

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Branches/Clubs on the Membership database during this period. This allows time for members to pay for their new membership card prior to transferring to a new Branch/Club.

- **Last week of August and first week in September** - annual renewal of membership cards will start to leave the mailing house (further information about the dates and distribution of cash cards to Branches will follow)
- **2 October** - collection of annual renewal membership fees for DD payers.

Legion Leadership Programme

Last year, following a gap of almost 20 years, a decision was taken to reinstate the RBL National Leadership Course and for this Course to take place again this year. It is a great opportunity for a limited number of dedicated Legion members to become more closely involved with the governance of the Legion and to build up a better understanding of the decisions taken, the challenges faced and the strategy for future development. The course is offered to **only twelve** delegates and will consist of briefings about the different Legion activities and an opportunity to have discussions with senior managers and volunteers.

The National Chairman, John Crisford asked the Membership Council to help him identify members who have the potential, knowledge, drive and dedication to best benefit both



themselves and the Legion. **Syed Mahmood of the GLD Committee** was successful in the selection process and has been invited to attend the course on 17 and 18

September 2014. Course delegates will also be invited to attend the County/District Chairmen's Seminar at Staverton Park (Daventry) immediately following the National Leadership Course (Friday 19 and Saturday 20 September 2014).

Here's hoping of great things to come that will have a positive impact for Syed and the Legion.

Chairman's message

The start of the WWI Commemoration period has respectfully got off to a momentous start with various activities across the country, with significant engagement from members of the public.

It is heart warming to see a hundred years on, how much appreciation is being shown for those that made the ultimate sacrifice.

For the younger generation, many are involved in school projects and learning experiences, gaining an understanding of their heritage.

Our National Chairman, John Crisford in the latest Legion magazine mentioned how we need to involve young people more. As we grow older and become set in our ways we need to think of the future generation of Legion supporters. The old adage of 'if you need a job doing well, do it yourself' it may not always be possible when our health fails us. We need to be able to trust our new volunteers and identify people who would like to take the reigns and train them up to lead on the Poppy Appeal or fresh innovations for fundraising.

In another 100 hundred years I'd like to think the world is at peace and our beneficiaries would not need to approach a charity for their basic needs, but reality being what it is - if we are still needed, it is what we do now that will see the Legion commemorate WWI once again and continue it's work.

I can honestly say the Legion and members have done all those that fell in WWI, proud.

I hope to see you all at the GLD Parade on 21 September.

Rob Richier

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.
by John McCrae, (May 1915)

Kohima Epitaph

When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today'.
- by John Maxwell Edmonds (1916)



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Greater London District Committee

Name	Position	Local Branch Member
Rob Richier	Chairman	Walthamstow
Reg Pinney	Vice Chairman	Southgate
Joanne Stevens	Treasurer	Elm Park
Phil Beckinsale		Harrow
Penny Bell-Wright	DPRO	Richmond
Bryan Binning		Greenford
Stan Bonner		Chingford
Irene Brockey		Sunbury
Robert Cantwell		Chingford
Chad Carress		Croydon
Griff Griffin		Romford
Ray Harris		Southgate
Jim Lowther		Chiswick
Syed Mahmood		Ilford
Alan Ronaldson	DPAC	Chingford
Peter Twidle		Hillingdon & District
Jack Weedon		Ilford

By Appointment

Welfare Rep

Standard Bearer

Ceremonial Officer

Parade Marshal

District Chaplin

WS, Met. Central Rep.

District Secretary

Ken Spowles

Michael Foster

Stan Heath

Reg Burton

Right Reverend Michael Ward

Janet Salter

Sarah Stephenson. Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA

Email:

GLDmembership@britishlegion.org.uk

Website:

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/greater-london>

Conference Committee

Penny Bell-Wright

Phil Beckinsale

Alan Ronaldson

Ken Spowles

David Justice

Finola Turner

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