The County Circular is published every two months and is the only way that the County can inform Members of what is going on. It is only sent to Club and Branch Secretaries so it is important that this information is passed on either at your meetings or through your own newsletter.

Circulation: Chairman  Secretary  Treasurer  Welfare Secretary  Membership Secretary

Dates for Turning of Pages

The Turning of Pages ceremony will take place on the following Saturdays at 11am. Any one is welcome to attend (please be at Christ Church by 10.45).

Volunteers to take part and recite the Exhortation and Kohima Epitaph as part of the ceremony should contact the County Secretary.

Tuesday 11 Nov 2014    I Mitchell
Saturday 3 January 2015  TBC

The dates for 2014 and 2015 are on the County Website together with the name of the member who has volunteered to take part.

Membership Handbook

A dedicated external web area has been produced to host a digital copy of the handbook.

Visit the external web area at:
www.britishlegion.org.uk/membershiphandbook

Username: memhandbook
Password: TRBLmem£86

There is a control sheet identifying all changes to the handbook on the site.

Poppy Appeal

The current Poppy Appeal total for the 2013 Appeal has now reached over £38m putting the Appeal at well over one million pounds ahead of last year’s total.

Popularity of the Poppy Appeal all year round lapel pin continues with over 2.2m sent out this year.

Poppy Appeal launch. In the absence of an Oxfordshire Community Fundraiser a Photo shoot was arranged with RAF Brize Norton for the Defence Movements School to be involved with a photo shoot.

Royal Charter

The revise Royal Charter has now been published. It is not being printed but is available on the RBL Website
http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/3760854/newroyalcharter.pdf

Membership Renewal 2014

Approximately £1.8M was collected from Direct Debit payers in October. 120,000 cards were sent directly to direct debit payers at end of August. 180,000 cards were sent via branches to cash payers in early September.

Database Online joining for all branches was agreed at the last Membership Council meeting. The project is still on track to go live from May 2015.

Does your branch have an item they wish to be included in the County Circular?
Contact the County Secretary, 3 St Andrews’ Court Wellington Street Thame OX9 3WT
abowes@britishlegion.org.uk  07768598811
Military membership There are now a total of 2,244 members of the Armed Forces signed up to the scheme.

Bicester and District Branch

Bicester and District Branch laid up the Bicester and Launton Standard on Saturday 18th October and dedicated their new standard with their new name which more accurately reflects their Branch area since the closure of the Chesterton and Wendlebury Branch.

Advice and Information Team Leader

Patricia Chadwick (previously Case Officer – Oxfordshire) has taken up the appointment of AITL within the SE Midlands wef from Thu 23 Oct 14.

Change of Title

With effect from 1st November the County Secretary will be known as

Membership Support Officer

This change is as a result of an internal review following the introduction of the 4 Pillars.

The title Change should not result in any difference to the support given to the County or branches.

RBL STATEMENT ON POPPY APPEAL

Following a few complaints referring to people ‘naming and shaming’ other individuals, organisations or businesses who do not want to take part in the Poppy Appeal, please find below the Royal British Legion official statement on the matter.

“The Legion never insists that anyone wear the poppy or support the Poppy Appeal. We believe firmly that wearing the poppy must be a matter of free and individual choice. The charity also vigorously defends the poppy and the Poppy Appeal from political exploitation by any partisan organisation and we disown such “naming and shaming” behaviour. The Legion is very grateful to the many shops and commercial enterprises which allow poppies to be distributed and collections to be taken on their private property or inside their trading premises. However, we never insist upon such permissions. Neither would we coerce businesses into allowing collections on their premises. And, under no circumstances, would the Legion support any boycott or public “naming and shaming” of traders who choose not to or are unable to support the Appeal.”

Pop in Update

On Tuesday 2 September, five of the Legion’s Pop In Centres opened: London, Manchester, Birmingham and Southampton and Cardiff. Bristol opened on 10th October.

So far, the Legion has welcomed over 3,500 visitors to our Centres already open in Liverpool, Leeds, Plymouth and Brighton, and the feedback so far has been positive. All other Pop In Centres should be completed and open by the end of the year.

There are now 264 secondary locations and drop in surgeries open across the UK.

Move of Area Office to Aylesbury

The lease has been signed and the builders commenced the shop fitting project on Mon 29 Sep 14

The plan is for the Area Team to move in to the new premises in early December

The opening of the Pop-In will not be immediately following our move, as volunteers will need to be recruited for the
A & I roles – the plan is prepared for this and info sheets and volunteer ads are in the shop window already, resulting in several enquiries to volunteer.

The new direct telephone numbers are not yet known for the new Area Office.

The existing Thame numbers will be closed down or diverted to the Contact Centre for a period. The contact number for the County Secretary is 07768598811 – Mobile

Poppy Shop in a Box

Feedback from members and the public was very positive on a trial of Shop in a Box and we took over £770 at the Brize Norton Families Day and £600 + and £121.22 PA donations at Thame Show from shop sales and an addition total of.

Branch Accounts

Branch Accounts (year end 30 Sep) were due at the County office by 30th Sep.

Only 70% have been received with 14 Branches still to make their return.

Please return the accounts to Thame as soon as practicable – There was no need to wait for your Branch AGM

Events

The Royal British Legion, Kidlington Branch, Presents a Concert by the Kidlington Concert Brass Band in Aid of the Poppy Appeal on Sunday 9th November 2014 at the Exeter Hall, in Kidlington at 7.30 pm.

Tickets will cost £8.00 and will be available in late October from Stan White on 01865 373236

or mobile no 07711778296.

E.Mail stanwhite@btinternet.com

Charlbury Branch are holding an Band Concert with “The Accidentals” in aid of

The Poppy Appeal

Friday 7th November at 8pm

War Memorial Hall Charlbury

Bar, Light refreshments, Raffle

Tickets £10 from Cotswold Frames or on the door

We are close to approaching 1,300 cadet units and schools on our central register, an increase of almost 20% in the past year! To improve the quality of the affiliation programme we have launched a short online survey for Legion Branches and Affiliated Youth Organisations. The survey will help identify how people have developed the partnership within their local communities and inform us of successful initiatives that we may be able to encourage nationally.

An email has been issued to those affiliated organisations that we have an email address for on our central database, however this only accounts for 150 out of the 1300 affiliations. Please may I ask you to invite Branches and affiliated organisations to take a few minutes to complete the survey via below:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FBH98J

Details of the findings will be made available in due course and this will be followed with another article in the Legion magazine to promote the scheme.

The MoneyForce website has been visited 134,757 times (from the launch date in March 2013 - August 2014). This figure is made up of users visiting the site only once (109,050) and returning users visiting the site more than once (25,000).

Living Well with Dementia

Channel 4 are near to completing the filming for the documentary ‘Living Well with Dementia’ which is due to be televised at the end of October. It will feature Galanos House.

Legion Manifesto: In January this year, we launched a consultation exercise with Legion members, staff and volunteers to help inform the Legion’s 2015 General Election ‘Manifesto’. The consultation closed in March and since then the Head Office team has worked with subject specialists from both within and outside the Legion to ensure that our policy proposals are both practically feasible and fully supported by evidence.
Two versions of the Manifesto have now been produced; one is a short version, which outlines our top five policy recommendations for government, and the other is an extended version, which details a further seven policy proposals and provides additional information on all of our policy recommendations. The short edition has been reproduced in hard copy whilst the extended edition will largely only be available to download from www.britishlegion.org.uk/manifesto. Both documents were officially launched on Friday 19 September, in advance of our launch receptions at each of the three main political parties’ conferences. The policies contained with the Manifesto will form the basis of the Legion’s future campaigning work.

**Legion household survey:** Earlier this year the RBL commissioned a household survey of the ex-Service community to provide an up-to-date profile of the size and needs of our potential beneficiaries. The key findings were that:

- The UK’s ex-Service community is largely elderly
- The UK’s ex-Service population is declining in size.
- Younger (working age) members of the ex-Service community differ significantly from the UK general population.
- Working age veterans are more likely than the general population of the same age to report a long term illness that limits their activities (24% vs 13%)
- Within the younger ex-Service community (16-34 year olds), finances and employment are significant problems.
- Many of the problems faced by the increasingly elderly ex-Service population are similar to those faced by the UK’s elderly as a whole.

**Enclosures**

Calling Notice for County Conference
Norris Trophy

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**Heroes Remembered**

**Captain Clarence Smith Jeffries, V.C**

Captain Jeffries was serving with the 34th Battalion Australian Infantry during the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge which began on 4th October 1917. On 12th October the Australian battalions moved over the summit of the ridge and attempted to push the German defence down the reverse slope in a north-easterly direction towards Passchendaele village.

Captain Jeffries was Officer Commanding “B" Company of 34th Battalion. There were numerous German blockhouses and pillboxes to be knocked out which were holding up the Australian attack. The advance of the 34th and 35th Battalions was held up by enemy fire from their left, centre and on the right.

The delay caused to the attack by the German defence from these strongpoints was threatening to hold up the whole attack. Two captains from the 35th Battalion, Captain Carr and Captain Dixon, made an attack on the pillbox in the centre of the position and a German trench to its rear, knocking four machine guns and 35 Germans out of the fight.

Captain Jeffries led a party of 2 N.C.O.s, including Sergeant Bruce, and 12 men. They captured a machine gun post, which included 4 machine guns and 35 Germans. Another enemy strong point later caused problems for the advancing unit and so, under heavy machine gun fire, Captain Jeffries led another party of men against the enemy strongpoint. He and his party of men captured more enemy machine guns and another 30 German soldiers. Captain Jeffries was mortally wounded by a machine gun bullet in the stomach. For his actions Captain Jeffries was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.