

GREATER LONDON DISTRICT Newsletter December 2015



A very Merry Christmas from Reg Pinney, GLD Chairman

On Tuesday, 1 December 2015, true to his word, GLD Chairman, Reg Pinney, promised to dress up as Santa Claus if branches donated £100 or more to the Poppy Appeal. Branches donated £250.00 to the Poppy Appeal, with more pledges to come.

The Pop In Centre hosted the Chairman's event. The morning saw Members from Leytonstone, Becontree, Hounslow, Romford and St Georges Branches drop by to chat informally and get O365 demonstrations for those that



wanted to view their Membership listing. They stayed on for the Christmas festivities of mulled wine and mince pies and to josh with the Chairman as Santa. At noon the local primary Cathedral School pupils arrived, poppy windmills and snowflake making started, followed by Carol singing with Members and staff joining in. Pupils were excited to meet veteran, Mr Joe Hubble and asked questions, such as how did he get his medals and what was it like to

fight? Afterwards all the children were invited to choose a lucky dip present from under the tree of wrapped RBL promotional items or from the Santa sack.

The school fed back the children had enjoyed their time at the Pop In Centre and hadn't stopped talking about it all afternoon. Hopefully the children weren't confused by the various names Father Christmas was called that day, i.e. Chairman, Santa and Reg!

The luxury Santa outfit was kindly loaned for free in support of the event by Mad World fancy dress outfitters at Old Street.



<http://madworldfancydress.com/>



Standard Bearers - Out and about

The Greater London District Standard Bearers have been as busy as ever taking part in major events such as the Festival of Remembrance and the Lord Mayor's Show and other various parades and ceremonies. September saw the GLD's Annual Parade through Richmond Town, led by the Surbiton Youth Marching Band and was honoured to have the National Chairman, John Crisford, in attendance.



Full photo gallery at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/96629202@N06/albums/72157658631052181>

At short notice Head Office requested Standard Bearers to attend the:-

Edith Cavell Commemoration

Tributes were held in Belgium and the UK on 12 October 2015 to mark the centenary of nurse Edith Cavell's execution in occupied Brussels during the First World War. Edith Cavell was executed by a German firing squad on October 12 1915 for helping more than 200 Allied soldiers escape from Belgium to the neutral Netherlands.



The Cavell Nurses Trust hosted the event and nurses from the Trust are seen here in front of the Memorial.

Standard Bearers from the GLD and Women's Section were mobbed by press photographers at the Memorial near Trafalgar Square.



John Crisford National Chairman was in attendance, left of photo.

Lloyd's Laying up and Dedication Service

On 13 October 2015, the Lloyd's & City of London Branch laid up their standard that carried the name 'Lloyd's of London'. Immediately following this they had their new Standard dedicated, to reflect the recent name change. Laura Hayworth, Lloyd's Standard Bearer performed impeccably for the Church Service at [St Katherine Kree](#). Soon after, Laura was able to carry the newly dedicated Standard at the Lloyd's Remembrance Service on 11 November.



Members of the Lloyd's choir singing at the short but essential service at St Katherine Kree.

LIVE ON TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING

Burma Star Commemoration

Terry Whittles, National Vice Chairman, was pleasantly surprised when his request for one or two Standard Bearers, to join him at the Burma Star VJ Wreath Laying at Lord Louis Mountbatten's Memorial on Horse Guards, 2 September 2015, turned into eight. Terry expressed his gratitude for their turn out, as did the Burma Star Association, for adding a certain sense of gravitas to the ceremony.



Photo by kind permission of Phil Crawley MBE, Burma Star Association

Commemoration for First World War soldier unknown to family for 98 years

Veterans, servicemen, Rabbis and members of a family from both sides of the Atlantic gathered in August at Plashet Jewish Cemetery East Ham Cemetery for a special commemoration.

Solomon Bird was born on February 13, 1898 and grew up in Stepney Green. He served with the Royal Fusiliers during the First World War, and died from a burst appendix in England on June 13, 1917.

None of the family members knew Solomon Bird even existed until a few months before this posthumous service.



Historian Stan Kaye, 61, who grew up in Mile End but now lives in Peterborough, stumbled across the grave - which had a recently installed headstone - and tracked the family down through genealogy websites.

Wreaths were laid by representatives from the family, Newham Council and the War Graves Commission, while members of the Association of Jewish ex-servicemen and women (AJEX) and TRBL carried Standards.

Poppy Appeal

The launch of the Poppy Appeal saw many activities across the City, one of which is the St Paul's Garden of Remembrance with over 20 Standards in attendance. RBL President Peter Wilkinson, made an address to the Livery Companies at the breakfast reception, thanking them for their support and - if they would like to give some more, TRBL are always happy to receive donations.

The Kent Poppy Express Train fundraiser had supporters jumping on and off station stops to be photographed with Standard Bearers. GLD Standard Bearers: Andy Miller and Jim Page, were kept busy with enthusiastic train buffs wanting to pose with them.



London Poppy Day

On 29 October the LPD extravaganza raised in excess of £850K.



Barbara Windsor - a staunch supporter of the Legion, created a flurry of press attention, when her remarks on those that refused to wear a Poppy made headline news on National TV as they filmed LPD events.

Eastcote RBL, Poppy Launch

Eastcote held a black tie event on Saturday 26 September, to launch the 2015 Poppy Appeal.



HRH Queen Elizabeth sent a letter of thank's to the Eastcote Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Harrow Branch of the Royal Artillery

Association, together with their ladies and guests, for their kind message of loyal greetings on the occasion of their dinner in support of the Eastcote Poppy Appeal and to commemorate the Sixty-Ninth Anniversary of the Harrow Branch of the Royal Artillery Association.

City of London Supporters

Here volunteer collectors, Nicole Sands and Sophie Caper from Stackhouse Poland Insurance Brokers were spotted manning their stall at Borough Market on 5 November. They were kept busy with visitors to the famous farmers market.



Mesothelioma Campaign Push

Some of you may already be aware of the Legion's latest campaign concerning compensation arrangements for veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma, which is a form of asbestos-related cancer. The Legion's campaigns team urgently needs your support to help raise the profile of this important issue.

For those unfamiliar with Mesothelioma, it is a particularly aggressive form of cancer that attacks the pleura of the lungs. The disease can take decades to materialise but, once diagnosed, most sufferers will live for only one to two years - at most. Tragically, it is not uncommon for some sufferers to have just months to live.

Given the disease's association with asbestos, Mesothelioma usually affects individuals who have worked in carpentry or construction but it has also afflicted a large number of veterans, particularly naval personnel who worked as engineers in the boiler rooms of ships. Sadly, over 2,500 naval veterans are projected to die from Mesothelioma before 2047.

In 2014, the Government set up a scheme to pay lump sum compensation to civilians who have contracted Mesothelioma and are unable to trace a liable employer or insurance company. The creation of this scheme exposed the fact that, because life expectancy is so short, unmarried or widowed veterans stand to receive

LIVE ON TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING

considerably less compensation than their civilian counterparts - as much as £150,000 in some instances. This is because veterans are unable to sue for injuries and illnesses sustained before 1987, meaning that the only avenue of redress open to them is the War Pension Scheme, which cannot award large lump sum payments to veterans diagnosed with 'long tail', terminal illnesses like Mesothelioma.

It is clear that current arrangements amount to a breach of the Armed Forces Covenant principle of 'no disadvantage due to Service'. As such, the Legion is calling on the Government to take urgent action to fairly compensate veterans for their suffering. In particular, we believe that veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma should be able to choose whether they receive a traditional War Disablement Pension (which can prove generous if the veteran has a surviving spouse to pass their award onto), or a lump sum compensation payment that is broadly comparable to those awarded under the Government's Diffuse Mesothelioma Scheme.

To date, the vast majority of the Legion's campaigning on this issue has been conducted behind the scenes. However, TRBL has started to raise the public profile of our campaign over the past couple of weeks, notably achieving front page coverage in the *Independent* and featuring on BBC radio. We would be grateful if you could aid us in this push by raising awareness of our campaign among local staff, members and volunteers, and by writing to your MP about this issue. Our campaign is currently reaching a critical stage, so any support that you can mobilise would be really helpful.

The easiest way to contact your MP is through the campaign pages of the Legion's website, where you simply need to enter your name and address details for an automatically generated template letter to be sent directly to your MP's email inbox. You can access this facility here: <http://e-activist.com/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=145&ea.campaign.id=43658>

The Legion is delighted to have the support of a number of other Service charities, including Seafarers UK, The Forces Pension Society, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Widows' Association, Poppyscotland, Legion Scotland, The Royal Naval Engineers' Benevolent Society, and The Royal Naval Association. With your support too, we're confident that we can secure a better deal for veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma.

800th Lord Mayor's Show

On Saturday 14 November the Royal British Legion entry comprising:-

- 12 Standard Bearers
- 23 GLD Youth Affiliated Members, carrying LIVE ON flags, from
 - 144 Sqn Richmond ATC
 - 1838 Elm Park ATC
 - Hackney and Clapton Sea Cadets
 - Barking & Dagenham College
- 9 Staff Members as poppy broly twirlers; took part in the 800th Lord Mayor's Show.



True to form the great British weather, decided to open up the flood gates and rained throughout most of the procession. With crowds lining most of the route and cheering all the way, an exuberance swept over everyone and rain couldn't dampen the enjoyment of taking part in this most historic of events. There was a genuine warmth and respect from the crowd when they saw the RBL brand approaching with Standards, flags and poppy umbrellas moving in harmony. The umbrella twirlers were made up from volunteer staff members, who practiced their routine at lunchtime and all personally financed their red outfits. Feedback received from the youth affiliated groups is they felt privileged to have taken part and really enjoyed the day.

Unfortunately the RBL entry missed being broadcast on the BBC as the programme was cut short for news updates on then very recent and shocking Paris bombings.

On this You Tube clip, at timeline 5:00 you can just catch the RBL entry following on from the

LIVE ON TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING

RBL Romford Marching Band:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2eyMph8tnU&feature=youtu.be>

Promise - it won't hurt!

At the request of the Branch Members, Elm Park Officers, agreed to hold a Membership subs renewal Clinic.



In the spirit of British 'Carry On' humour, Branch Committee Members, Lin Reynolds, Kay Leiser, and Jo Stevens donned doctor and nurses outfits as they gave surgical guidance on the new methods for renewal, joining and of payment options available. Barbara Windsor was not able to attend as she was preparing for her London Poppy Day activities.

For those Members that wish to manage their membership data record online - visit this link and register.

<https://selfservice.britishlegion.org.uk/security/login>

O365 Membership Administration Portal Training

In-house training is available for those with a keen desire to use the O365 application. Two provisional day sessions are reserved for those GLD Branch Committee Members that wish to attend training at Haig House. Eight maximum can attend each session. Thursday 11 February and Friday 12 February 2016 are set aside. First come first served. Please email sstephenson@britishlegion.org.uk saying you wish to undertake the O365 training and which day you would like to attend? These sessions are for those already in possession of basic competency computer skills, and unable to cater for those that have not used a PC or laptop.

*'When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'*

Phil Beckinsale - RIP



Phil Beckinsale while serving on the GLD Committee, sadly passed to higher service on 5 October 2015.

Phil started his military life in the Royal Signals and then the RAF Regiment. He served in Korea, Bornea and overseas but was always self effacing about his achievements. Phil worked tirelessly for the RBL Poppy Appeal, the Harrow Branch and for numerous Regimental and Military Associations and carried the RAFA Standard. Phil was well liked and respected and this was apparent at his funeral, where there was only standing room in the Breakspear chapel. Phil will not be forgotten.

Greater London District Committee

Name	Position	Local Branch Member
Reginald Pinney	Chairman	Southgate
Joanne Stevens	Treasurer	Elm Park
Bryan Binning	Member	Greenford
Irene Brockey	Member and (PDRO)	Sunbury
Chad Carress	Member	Croydon
Griff Griffin	Member	Romford
Jim Lowther (AKA John)	Member	Chiswick
George Dryburgh	co-opted Member and (DPAC)	Romford
Chris Carr	co-opted Member	Romford
Raymond Harris	co-opted Member	Southgate
Jackie Pinney	co-opted Member	Southgate
Linda Reynolds	co-opted Member	Elm Park
Jack Weedon (AKA John)	co-opted Member	Ilford

By Appointment:-

Standard Bearer	Michael Foster
Ceremonial Officer	Stan Heath
Parade Marshal	Reg Burton
District Chaplain	Father Jonathan Sedgewick, Priest in Charge at St George the Martyr
Welfare Representative	Ken Spowles
WS, Met. Central Rep.	Janet Salter
Membership Support Officer, GLD,	Sarah Stephenson
	Haig House, London Area Office, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA

Email:

sstephenson@britishlegion.org.uk

Website:

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

Conference Committee

Chad Carress
Bryan Binning
Griff Griffin
Ken Spowles
David Justice
Finola Turner



LIVE ON TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING