



# KENT COUNTY NEWS

TRBL South East Area Office (Kent)  
Royal British Legion Village  
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Registered Charity 219279

County website: [www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/kent](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/kent)

**February 2017**

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

## **COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The County Conference this year went very well with almost half our branches represented and a good number of visitors. In addition, we had an excellent response from our Standard Bearers who as usual were extremely well turned out and once again a credit to their branches and the County.

It was good to hear from Nikki Ward on the work that our Area Case Officers are doing daily. A copy of her report is attached to this copy of the News.

At Conference I said that from this year we shall be continuing the branch hands-on liaison with the County Committee representatives and I have allocated each member of the committee a number of branches. Some changes have had to be made and although most have the same branches as last year a number have new ones. This list has now been produced and the members have been asked to contact you shortly. I am hoping that this will enable you to speak face to face with a county member to give them issues that are concerning you and also we can establish your views on matters that I need answers on, to take to the Membership Council and National Trustees.

I was pleased to learn at Conference how well Kent is regarded at the Senior Level in the Legion and this from our Guest Speaker Lt Col D Whimpenny who is not only a Trustee but also Chairman of the Membership Council. He also said the Conference was extremely well run, so a great thank you to the Conference and the County Committee for all you did to make it so.

We have a lot to do this year and in addition to our normal work I would like to ask all branches to support and operate the Branch Community Support (BCS) Scheme. It sounds onerous but is, in most cases, no more than you already do, although under its banner you could actually extend the work you do within your community. I personally now know what it's like to be lonely and even though I have a busy time as your Chairman there are times when I am at home alone and would love someone to phone or pop in for a cuppa, or even to invite me to an activity or event. So what about that Veteran or Widow who sits at home with nothing to do and sees no one. Just look at your membership at those names that don't attend, are they in that boat? If so, give them a call. Yes, you do need to complete a BCS monthly return once registered but if that is a problem for you please contact Cherrie Harris our County BCS Representative who will help.

My other planned activities are to update and keep updated the County Website and to publish on it your branch stories and events, so for this I need you to send photos and articles to our new Webmaster whose email is [kentrbwebmaster@btinternet.com](mailto:kentrbwebmaster@btinternet.com)

I am also working on setting up a new branch or reformed branch under the 'Invicta' name to be the County Holding Branch where people who are unsure what branch they want to be in, can first join the Legion in Kent. Then after they have visited a branch can then transfer to that branch. It will also be a place where younger people can join who are not ready to join branches at this stage in their working life, but want to keep in touch and also take part in local, countywide and national events. They will be kept informed by Email and other social media methods. I am also planning to work with the Youth Officer and link our Youth Members into this to enable them to obtain all the up to date information direct.

A new year has now started and let's look forward to it being another good year for Kent County.

*Richard Cast*  
County Chairman

### **DONATIONS TO COUNTY FUNDS**

The following donations have been gratefully received:

£500	Shoreham Branch
£100	Sutton Valence

### **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

Membership reported that of those that were due to renew their membership on 1st October 186,000 had done so by 24th January. This left 29,000 members who had failed to renew and 930 of those were members of Kent Branches. All would be receiving a final reminder with a short time to renew before their membership is lapsed.

### **BRANCH MS1 RETURNS**

Out of the branches required to submit their MS1 Branch Information Form by 31st December, unfortunately six have still not been received. The six branches still outstanding are:

Fordcombe	Pluckley & Little Chart
Knockholt	Sandwich
Leigh	South Darent

### **COUNTY CEREMONIAL PARTY**

Branches requesting the County Ceremonial Party to attend a parade or ceremony should be aware that the Party in full consists of the County Chairman, the County Parade Marshal and the County Standard Bearer or their deputies. The latest version of the form is attached.

Any Branch holding a parade may ask for the County Standard, always accompanied by the County Chairman or Vice Chairman, and other Branch Standards to join them on parade but there is no requirement to request the full County Ceremonial Party.

### **STANDARD BEARER TRAINING**

The next standard bearer training session will be on 12th March at the Capel Morris community hall, Aylesford, 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Please wear casual clothing (uniform not required) but please wear shoes and not trainers. Don't forget your sling, gauntlets and standard.

Refreshments will be supplied. If you want to confirm attendance or have any questions, please contact me on [annjane Austen@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annjane Austen@yahoo.co.uk) or 01227 731385. I look forward to seeing you there.

*Ann Austen*  
County Ceremonial Coordinator

## **BRANCH STANDARDS OVERSEAS**

Branch Chairmen and Standard Bearers should be aware that you must have permission from the Legion to take a Standard overseas and they need to know exactly when and where it is going (paragraph 5.2 of the Ceremonial Handbook refers). Once authority has been given the Standard is then covered by Legion insurance. Application, by letter or e-mail, should be sent to the MSO at least one month before departure.

All must remember that it is the Chairman's Standard not the Standard Bearer's so whenever a Standard is taken on parade in this country or overseas a suitable entry should be entered in the minutes of a meeting of the Branch Committee. This is so everyone knows where the Standard will be at any given time.

## **ISLE OF THANET FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE**

The Festival Committee held their AGM and all the present officers were re-elected. It was agreed at the meeting that a donation of £3,000 would be sent to the Poppy Appeal. The Committee thank all who supported the event and trust that everyone will support us again this year. The Festival will be on Friday 3rd November at the same venue - the Margate Winter Gardens - and seat prices stay the same. We are very fortunate to have the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas so we are expecting the event to be very well supported. Thank you once again.

*Austin (Aussie) Walker*  
Festival Director

## **PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM AUSSIE WALKER**

I would like to thank all who sent me congratulations on being awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List.

This came as a complete surprise to me and took time to sink in. But of course it was only possible because of the support I have received from you, the Members of the Royal British Legion. Remember we are a team and there is no I in team.

So thank you all and good luck to all our Members for the future.

*Aussie*

## **ANNUAL COUNTY CONFERENCE**

Headcorn Village Hall provided the venue for what proved to be an excellent Conference on 21st January with around 120 in the hall including 31 delegates from 28 branches and 14 Branch Standards in addition to the Union and the County Standard. Amongst the guests were His Worship the Mayor of Maidstone Cllr Derek Butler, and the Vice Chairman of Headcorn Parish Council, Mrs Bridget Dungey. The Guest Speaker this year was Lieutenant Colonel David Whimpenny, Legion Trustee and Chairman of the Membership Council.

Two members of the County Committee were re-elected and one new member was elected. Two members, Mr A E Clarke MBE and Mrs C A Austen have stood down. Mr Clarke's contribution to County was recognised and he was made a County Vice President. The County Officers and Committee for this year are:

County President	Cllr L B Ridings MBE JP
County Chairman	Mr R C Cast
County Vice Chairman	Mr R Graham
County Treasurer	Mr S M J Gatward FMAAT
Membership Support Officer	Mr A J West BEM

Committee:

Mr R M Mann	Sutton Valence	Mrs S J Foster	Elham Valley
Mrs A J Austen	Chartham	Mr R Bingham BEM	Ashford
Mr N E Williams	Sittingbourne & Milton Regis	Mrs M Clarke	Orpington

Mr S M J Gatward     RBL Village  
Mrs C E Harris        New Romney

Mr C Richards        Ramsgate  
Mr D Harris            New Romney

The Awards presented at Conference were:

**Moore Trophy**  
(Branch Efficiency)

New Romney Branch

**Newport Cup**  
(Branch with largest percentage membership increase)

Dover White Cliffs Branch

**Connie Williams Cup**  
(Group Efficiency)

Shepway Area Group

**Mungeam Cup**  
(Standard Bearers Competition Winner)

Mrs Linda Fletcher (Rochester & Strood Branch)

**1945-1995 Anniversary Shield**  
(Standard Bearers Competition Runner Up)

Mr Julian De Zille (Downs Branch)

**Banger Cup**  
(Standard Bearers Competition Novice Winner)

Miss Victoria Harris (New Romney Branch)

**John Partridge Shield**  
(Standard Bearer showing most progress in the year)

Miss Victoria Harris (New Romney Branch)

**Charles Stevens Trophy**  
(Person raising most on the Poppy Walk)

Mr Mike Robinson (Shoreham Branch)

**Tom Asprey Cup**  
(Branch raising most on the Poppy Walk)

Shoreham Branch

**Tom Styles Shield**  
(Branch with a Club raising most on the Poppy Walk)

Whitstable Branch

**County Certificates**

Mr Richard Fry (Fordcombe Branch)

Mr Mike Sterba (Staple Branch)

## **FUNDRAISING - DIRECT MARKETING**

The door-to-door fundraising campaign, which caused some angst in certain areas, has now ended and the DM team will be using Private Site activity to recruit new regular giving donors.

During the trial phase of our private site fundraising campaign last year, 2,167 new regular giving supporters were successfully recruited, thereby exceeding the initial target of 1,545. There was positive feedback on this method of fundraising which will continue throughout 2017.

Private Site fundraising involves a small team of face-to-face fundraisers working on behalf of TRBL at branded installations in locations that offer a high footfall of potential supporters. The campaign will encourage people to sign up to a regular Direct Debit donation to support our work.

All fundraisers will be trained by TRBL and will be working from pre-agreed procedures although some fundraisers will adapt to reflect their individual style. They will be wearing an Appco Group Support ID badge, they will be easily recognisable in Legion branded clothing and will have a letter of authorisation as well as paperwork which relates specifically to the Legion. The Fundraisers will give their names and show their ID cards upon request.

This year's activity will start on 30th January for a period of six weeks (Mon-Sun) and location details will be e-mailed to branches each week irrespective of whether the team are in our area or not just in case you see them on your travels.

Should there be any problems it is requested that you do not speak to the press regarding this campaign without contacting our PR Department. Inaccurate reporting to the press can cost the Legion significant amounts of money and potential damage to our reputation.

## **ORPINGTON BRANCH**

Orpington says goodbye to one of its most well loved members, with a remarkable story. Cecil Anthony Asher, known to all as Tony, joined the Royal Navy at the age of 16, from Dr Barnardo's. At 17 Ordinary Seaman Tony joined HMS Exeter in 1942 before sailing to the Pacific, where she was sunk in the 2nd Battle of the Java Sea on the 1st March 1942. 652 of her crew including Tony were eventually picked up by the Japanese after swimming for 29 hours. This was to be just the start of a terrible 3 1/2 years in captivity. Tony eventually ended up in a POW camp on a tropical island called Celebes, now called Sulawesi. The absolute inhuman treatment and starvation that they endured, is hard to imagine, but is well documented.

Occasionally Tony would talk of the treatment inflicted upon them by the brutal guards. Of the original 652 only 502 survived. When they were rescued they were little more than walking skeletons. They were repatriated in September 1945 and shipped home via Australia and South Africa on the submarine depot ship HMS Maidstone. By the time Tony arrived home he had been away nearly 5 years.

Tony was a true gentleman and didn't appear to bear any animosity to the Japanese at all. He was a much loved and respected member of both the Royal British Legion in Orpington and the Royal Naval Association. He was always smiling and I never heard him say a bad thing about anyone or indeed ever complain. Tony met the love of his life, in Piccadilly Circus, on a night out. They married and had one daughter and eventually three grandchildren.

Tony was bit of a poet and shortly before his death wrote this poem:

Just say goodbye and God bless, and seal it with a kiss  
For it is only all of you that I will always miss.  
I've lived my life, my duties done,  
I've done the best for everyone.  
Kind memories I leave behind, I couldn't ask for more,  
And now I'll fly to those I love, who have been and gone before

## **RBL VILLAGE BRANCH**

This is advance notice that the Branch will be holding a quiz night on Friday 10th March starting at 19.00 in the Capel Morris Community Hall for teams of six. Further information will be in the next County News.

## **MILITARY RELATED PRESENTATIONS**

Martin Stoneham of the West Kingsdown & District Branch and Chairman of the Friends of the Royal Engineers Museum often gives talks to various organisations and this year's programme includes the following. There is no fee for ex Forces associations. For further information please contact Martin at [martin@stoneham.org](mailto:martin@stoneham.org) or on 01474 853014.

**'...There's some corner of a foreign field that is forever England.'** The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (1917–2017): an outline of its origins in the early stages of the Great War, its subsequent development, visiting its cemeteries and its value to researchers and family history enthusiasts. Reference is made to CWGC burials in the area local to the venue of the talk.

**Mons to the Somme: World War 1:** Covering the retreat from Mons to the Marne, the advance to the River Aisne, the move to Flanders and the events of 1916. Particular reference is made to the Generals, various actions of the Royal West Kent Regiment and the work of the Royal Engineers.

**Bailey: the bridge and the man:** A talk about the eponymous bridge, from its development at the start of World War 2, earlier military bridges, its successors and its current military and civilian use.

**A Forgotten Medal for Gallantry:** The story of the Albert Medal now superseded by the George Cross.

**The Royal Engineers Museum:** A former Sapper's personal view of the roles of the Royal Engineers as displayed at the Royal Engineers' Museum, Gillingham, focussing on their World War 1 activities.

**Hobart's Funnies: before, then and now:** Describing the specialised tanks that came to the fore on D-Day and have remained in use since then and are on active duty in Afghanistan. Examples of some of these machines can be seen at the Royal Engineers Museum.

Regards to you all

*Tony West*

Membership Support Officer

Email: [twest@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:twest@britishlegion.org.uk)



## LEST WE FORGET

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

Mrs Margaret Newell	Birchington
Mr Colin Clayson	Canterbury
Mr Derek Townsend	Cowden, Hartfield & District
Mr Arthur Clements	Dymchurch & District
Mr Colin Hart	"
Mr Dennis Buckenham	Gillingham
Mr Michael Fisher-Barham	Hawkhurst
Mr James Munro-Faure	"
Mr Victor Huthwaite	Hythe & Saltwood
Mr Maurice Loder	Lenham & Harrietsham
Mr William Bagwell	Littlebourne & District
Mr Denis Stygal	Minster & Monkton
Mr Cecil Asher	Orpington & District
Mrs Jacqueline Digges	"
Mrs Margaret Parkinson	Rochester & Strood - <i>former President</i>
Mr Brian Heyes	Royal British Legion Village
Mr George Matthews	Royal Tunbridge Wells - <i>Vice President aged 99</i>
Mr Leonard 'Bob' Sturley	"
Mr Laurence Smithers	Sittingbourne & Milton Regis
Mr Frank Westguard	Tonbridge



*Our deepest sympathies go to their families and friends*



# KENT COUNTY DIARY OF EVENTS - 2017

## FEBRUARY

Sat	4th	Branch Management Training - Capel Morris Centre (10 am)
Sun	12th	The Astor Big Band - Leas Cliff, Folkestone (for Poppy Appeal)
Sat	18th	Branch Management Training - Capel Morris Centre (10 am)
Sun	26th	South East Regional Standard Bearer Competition - Cobham, Surrey

## MARCH

Sat	18th	Branch Management Training - Capel Morris Centre (10 am)
Sun	26th	Standard Bearer Training - Capel Morris Centre (10 am)

## APRIL

Sun	16th - 17th	Medway Steam & Transport Rally - Chatham Historic Dockyard *
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## MAY

Sun	7th	Poppy Walk - Whitstable Castle (10 am)
Sat	20th - 21st	Annual Conference - Southport

## JUNE

Sun	11th	County Parade - Dover (3 pm)
Sat	9th - 11th	Folkestone & Ashford Military Show - Sellindge Show Ground
Sat	24th	Armed Forces Day - Great Lines, Gillingham *

## JULY

Tue	25th-29th	War & Peace Revival - The Hop Farm, Beltring *
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## AUGUST

Sat	19th-20th	Headcorn Combined Ops Military Vehicle & Air Show *
Sat	26th - 28th	Military Odyssey - County Showground, Detling *
Thu	31st	Pedal to Paris - Greenwich to Dover stage

## SEPTEMBER

Sat	16th - 17th	Salute to the '40s - Chatham Historic Dockyard *
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## OCTOBER

Sun	8th (tbc)	County Standard Bearer Competition - Ditton
Wed	25th	Poppy Launch - County Hall, Maidstone
Sat	28th	County Poppy Lunch - Brompton Barracks

## NOVEMBER

Fri	3rd	Thanet Festival of Remembrance - Winter Gardens, Margate (note change)
Sat	11th	Armistice Day
Sat	11th	Festival of Remembrance - Royal Albert Hall
Sun	12th	Remembrance Sunday

**DECEMBER**

**Sat 16th Carol Service - Capel Morris Centre (2.30 pm)**

**JANUARY 2018**

**Sat 20th County Conference - Headcorn Village Hall (1 pm)**

**\* County Recruiting Stall**

Updated: 27th January 2017

## **A Day in the Life of a Case Officer in the South East**

(as presented at Kent County Conference on 21st January 2017)

I have worked for The Royal British Legion for the past three and a half years and no two days are the same and that is why I love my job and working for this wonderful Organisation. I am not office based, and spend a lot of time visiting clients, I also work from the Brighton office when required and a lot of you may have already seen me around the Royal British Legion Village in Aylesford, where our Kent office is based; I can always be found making the Tea.

As a Case Officer I visit clients in their own homes and at Outreaches across the South East. My client base varies in age from 18-99 and in care support needs, ranging from a singular need (cooker) to a complex need of debt advice/Mental Health support to a befriending request.

Take Poppy for instance. Her daughter called our Contact Centre when Poppy lost her husband earlier this year; he had been her carer as she had undergone major heart surgery herself and was still recuperating. Unbeknown to Poppy and her daughter, her late husband had left a number of debts and she was consumed with the family grieving and worrying how she was going to manage financially. Poppy's husband had served with the RAMC and her daughter called us for advice and guidance in dealing with the debts; one of which it was soon established was secured against the property. I visited Poppy and her daughter in the family home and soon recognised her range of needs and how the Legion could support her. Poppy was referred to our BDMA service and within 6 weeks of working together, the BDMA had negotiated a sustainable repayment plan with the company owed and this meant Poppy had the reassurance that she could remain in her own home and meet the repayment plan comfortably. At this point I could have walked away, thinking the Legions work was complete, however, after completing a full needs assessment with Poppy and her daughter, on my original visit, it soon became apparent there were other pressing welfare needs.

Poppy's home had no heating; the original back boiler having broken some 18 months previous and she was reliant on electric heaters for warmth, at a huge expense. She was wrapped up in blankets in her chair; which in itself was a health and safety risk should she get up quickly and fall. So I was faced with an elderly lady, recovering from major heart surgery, the loss of a loved one and facing a winter with no heating. The Legion funded a new heating system with a new energy efficient boiler and new radiators as this was the most cost effective solution, given the property was over 40 years old. My work as a Case Officer was complete but the Branch could have stepped in; if they were able to offer Branch Community support.

Poppy would have loved a home visit from her local Branch, or a telephone call to see how she was recovering after her operation and through her grieving process but her local Branch had nobody available to offer this to her. However, any Branch can offer a telephone call to client as they do not know where you are ringing from; they just look forward to a chat and reassurance that somebody is looking out for them. This Service is so valuable, especially to the infirm, elderly and vulnerable and I would ask all Branches to consider signing up. So often as a Case Officer, I come across clients like Poppy, who would benefit from Branch Community support, that I as a Case Officer am unable to provide but where a Branch could. The same as a Branch may identify support needs on a simple home visit and need to refer to the South East Team for further assistance. So many of you already undertake good work within your Branches and we need to know who you are, what you do and what capacity you have so that we can utilise you and we need you to encourage others to join in too. Branch Community support needs you and so do our clients!

Please contact MSO Tony West for further information.

Nikki Ward  
Case Officer South East Team

# REQUEST FOR COUNTY CEREMONIAL PARTY

Before completing the proforma below, branches/organisations are advised to contact the Membership Support Officer to determine that the proposed date of their parade or ceremony does not clash with a previously arranged event.

*Branches requesting that the County Ceremonial Party attend a parade or ceremony should be aware that the Party in full consists of the County Chairman, the County Parade Marshal and the County Standard Bearer or their deputies.*

Early in the planning stage of any ceremonial event it is advisable for the organisers to invite the County Parade Marshal or his representative to attend a planning meeting so that his advice can be sought, thereby preventing any embarrassing situations arising on the day.

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Branch: .....

Event: .....

Day, date and time: .....

Time parade forms up: .....

& .....

Location: .....

Names of additional .....

County Officers required .....

to attend parade: .....

(see paragraph above) .....

Name of branch contact: .....

Appointment: ..... Tel: .....

Approved  
County Chairman: ..... Date: .....

Approved  
Parade Marshal: ..... Date: .....

Please return form to: Membership Support Officer  
The Royal British Legion  
South East Area Office (Kent)  
Royal British Legion Village  
Aylesford  
Kent  
ME20 7NL