



KENT COUNTY NEWS

TRBL South East Area Office (Kent)
Royal British Legion Village
Aylesford, Kent ME20 7NL

Membership Support Officer

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Welfare & Fundraising

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August 2017

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

MSO ON LEAVE

The MSO will be taking leave during the period 19th August - 3rd September returning to the office on 4th September.

COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Blink and its gone. That's how July has been. The County Diary was again full starting with the Dedication of the Isle of Sheppey Standard and the Laying up of the Old Sheerness one. A strange day for me having to start the afternoon as the Branch President and finish by taking the salute as the County Chairman. I was glad my daughter had a big bag to hold the Chains of Office.

Along with the usual meetings in the month I met the Chairmen of Surrey and Sussex at the South East Area Leadership Meeting. This gives the opportunity to hear what other Counties are planning or have done and also to hear from Membership Council, Area, Welfare, Clubs and Fundraising Managers.

The same day I attended a meeting with the Lord Lieutenant and a number of his Deputies at which we were involved in the planning of a Drumhead Service to take place at the Kent Show Ground on Sunday 23 September 2018 to commemorate the end of the First World War. This event, still obviously in the planning stage, will see all the Service, Ex Service and Civilian organisations on parade. You will hear more as it develops so please put the date in your diary. Kent RBL will play an important part in this and it will be good if you and your standards were on parade. I still haven't obtained the details of all organisations so if you belong to or know of any please email me at kentchairmanrbl@btinternet.com.

The County was involved in the Kent Challenge Games run by Ashford Borough Council and much praise was given to our RBL Members for their support.

Having this weekend commemorated the start of the Battle of Passchendaele, or the 3rd Battle of Ypres, I was invited to my home town of Sittingbourne to attend the Service on Sunday 30th and had the honour of reciting the Exhortation and laying a wreath on behalf of the County. A well turned out number were present and it was a beautiful service. Well done Sittingbourne & Milton Regis Branch for organising the event.

A poem that was read at the service inspired me to take a new look at this horrendous battle. It was written by Daniel Lake from a visit to Flanders and is a look at the area today reflecting on the past.

On these fields of Passchendaele, skylarks sing and cattle graze; In these fields of Flanders lives were spent in far off days. No hint of what went on here! No sign of blood and bones; but sixty thousand

souls rest here beneath the white headstones; on these fields of Passchendaele, where roam the silent sheep, the only sound the wailing winds; those mothers who still weep: Over fields of Passchendaele.

On these fields of Passchendaele, men walked against the fire, while lead and splinters fell like rain, they clung to bloodied wire. They prayed to God almighty that this day they may get through, but God's not listening Tommy son, he hasn't time for you on these fields of Passchendaele; where donkeys planned their war. Far from the filthy trenches they were spared what lions saw on these fields of Passchendaele.

On these fields of Passchendaele, I stand without a clue of what you poor men suffered, or what you had to do. But I can feel your pain as a vice surrounds my heart, that crushes breath within me till it forces tears to start for men who died so bloodily, from gas or lead or shell, who drowned in blood and mud, in this place of utter hell: On these fields of Passchendaele.

At the July meeting of the Membership Council it was agreed that Meopham, Cobham & Luddesdowne sub-Branch be closed. The Branch had struggled for years to keep it's head above water but closure was inevitable I'm afraid. I'd like to thank Chairman Brian Friend for his dedication to the Branch.

At the same meeting it was agreed that the Legion licence held by Hythe Club be withdrawn. It's a shame as it was a good Legion club. The same applies to Westerham Club as its doors have now closed and the shutters pulled down.

Richard Cast
County Chairman

BRANCH ACCOUNTS - END OF YEAR

Please ensure this information is passed to the Branch Treasurer

Treasurers are reminded that Branch Accounts were to be closed at 30th June and that a copy of the accounts together with supporting Bank Statements plus a letter of 'Authority to Disclose Information' **for each account** must be submitted to the County Office by 30th September at the very latest.

Branch Officers should be ensuring that as much help as possible is given to the Treasurer to ensure that they can successfully close down the books and produce the Branch Accounts.

The branch accounts documents (the Treasurer's Packs) have been sent by post and they should have been received by the end of June. They will also be published on Office 365 for those on MAP. If a hard copy is preferred please contact the MSO. Please note that packs will not be sent to branches that are registered on LOMAS and electronic copies have already been sent to those branches.

AUDIT/EXAMINATION OF BRANCH ACCOUNTS

Please ensure this information is passed to the Branch Treasurer

We have arranged Branch Audit Days with the Independent Examiners in the RBL Village although because of available space, this will have to be on a timed appointment basis only. If your branch wishes to take up this opportunity to get your books audited, there is no cost to you except the travel costs by your Treasurer. The dates for these audits are:

Thursday 3rd August	Thursday 7th September
Wednesday 9th August	Wednesday 13th September
Thursday 17th August	Wednesday 20th September

All are from 10am until 1pm. Please contact Richard Cast on 01795 474179 or at richardcast@btinternet.com to arrange your appointment. Audits will take place in a meeting room provided by RBLI and treasurers must report to RBLI Reception in the first instance. Car parking is in the Capel Morris car park and the postcode for satnav is ME20 7NL.

Further information on auditing accounts can be found in the July issue of County News but remember, if you have any difficulties please let the MSO know sooner rather than later; we are here to help.

BRANCH AGMs / COMPLIANCE

The Legion year ends on 30th September and your Branch AGM's are to be held between 1st October and 30th November. Branch are reminded that to be compliant there must be four separate members holding the main officer roles of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. There also needs to be a minimum of three additional committee members and there must be a named Branch Community Representative (formally Welfare Officer) who can be one of the committee members.

Branches should ideally have a succession plan so that each role is covered by a non-official deputy who can step in should the need arise. Now is the time to plan so that everything is in place for the AGM.

WELFARE REFERRALS

This is a reminder that **all** those requesting welfare assistance need to be referred to the Legion's Contact Centre on **0808 802 8080** (calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks) or via e-mail at info@britishlegion.org.uk. **Nobody** seeking help should be referred direct to County Office or to members of the Welfare Team, i.e. Case Officers and Advice & Information Officers.

STANDARD BEARER TRAINING

The next standard bearer training session will be on 20th August at the Capel Morris community hall, Aylesford, 10.00am to 1.00pm.

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

For competition candidates (see below), there is another training session on 17th September. This session will cover all the moves required for competition.

Refreshments will be supplied. If you want to confirm attendance or have any questions, please contact me on annjaneausten@yahoo.co.uk or 01227 731385.

STANDARD BEARER COMPETITION

This year's County Standard Bearer competition will take place on Sunday 8th October at the Army Reserve Centre, London Road, Ditton, Aylesford ME20 6DB.

Those taking part should arrive by midday for a 1.00 pm start. There will be refreshments available. Spectators are more than welcome.

If you would like to take part in the competition, please contact me on 01227 731385 or annjaneausten@yahoo.co.uk by 24th September please.

STANDARD BEARER DRESS AND EQUIPMENT

GP90 is next year, as we all know, and some of you may want to update your standard bearer equipment before the parade (or just to upgrade existing kit).

Standard bearer uniforms (the black suit) can be paid for by the Branch along with the tie and cap badge. The tie and cap badge can be found in the Poppy Shop under collections, membership (www.poppyshop.org.uk/collections/membership.html). The tie is the multi membership badge motif design. The suit doesn't have to cost a fortune, ASDA do sell black suits at reasonable prices.

For slings, gauntlets and the brass insert for the sling, AA Flags can supply these items. No doubt other suppliers can be found but I found AA Flags to be reasonably priced. They can also supply the cord and tassels for the standard too. If you require a new sling badge these are available from the Poppy Shop. Again the Branch provides these items.

Ann Austen
County Ceremonial Coordinator

THANET FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

Just a reminder that the Isle of Thanet Festival of Remembrance will take place at 7pm on Friday 3rd November at the Winter Gardens, Margate. Tickets are available from the Winter Gardens Box Office on 01843 296111. This event is in its 70th year and is self financed. It raises on average £2,500 a year for the Poppy Appeal.

We are still after more Standards to attend as, to date, there are 11 Legion Standards plus the Colour Party. There are in addition 13 Association and Cadet Standards attending. If your Standard is not booked in please contact me on 01843 224805 or austinwalker@live.co.uk and I will send your ticket. Alternatively just turn up on the night and your Standard is your ticket.

We need your support to keep this important event on the calendar. We look forward to seeing you all on the night.

Austin Walker MBE
Festival Director

LAUNCH OF NEW POP-IN AT CRAWLEY

On Friday 7th July we saw the launch of the new Drop-In facility open up at The Civic Halls in Crawley, Sussex. Councillor Brian Quinn, The Mayor of Crawley, officially opened the drop-in and was joined on the day by Horsham District Council Chairman, Mr Roger Clarke, and his wife and other local dignitaries. The launch was well attended and enjoyed by all.



There are about 7,000 residents within the Crawley area who draw a war pension and we need to get the word out that we are now offering a multi agency outreach facility which may be able to assist those who need it. Organisations that have so far committed to this exciting new venture are the Poppy Factory, Help for Heroes, SSAFA, Veterans UK and Carers FIRST. The Royal British Legion also have a Benefit, Money and Debt Adviser and a Case Officer to see on the day.

Anyone who is still serving, a veteran or a reservist and their immediate families can turn up on the 1st Friday of the month, 10am-12.30pm, to seek advice and support or just turn up for a cuppa, biscuit and a natter! The Civic Halls are at The Boulevard, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1UZ.

SHOREHAM BRANCH



The Branch held a Cream Tea in the garden of one of the Committee members on Saturday 15th July. It was very well supported by members and non-members and a total of £342 was raised.

ISLE OF OXNEY BRANCH



The Branch recently attended Stone Fete where we raised £113.80 for the Poppy Appeal. A further £71.32 was raised at a local school fete making a total of £185.12 raised from the two raffles held. Here you can see a cheerful Chairman Tony Bullock, Membership Secretary Terry Hodder and Treasurer Stephen Lewis.

NEW ROMNEY BRANCH

On Thursday 20th July 2017 the 1st New Romney Scout Group donated a new World War II memorial bench to the town, in recognition of the heroic contributions made during the war years by New Romney residents, both at home and overseas. The Scouts raised the funds themselves, which included a very 'chocolatey' Chocolate Evening back in May, which Branch members attended.

The bench has been situated on the Greens at Littlestone, which overlooks our own piece of World War II history. The Phoenix Caisson off Littlestone was built in 1943-4 as a breakwater component of the pre-fabricated Mulberry Harbours, which were a key element of the Normandy landings. It remains where it was 'parked' prior to D-Day as it was unable to be refloated and towed across the Channel.

Branch members attended the dedication service and stayed for the sausage sizzle afterwards. It was a busy night for the Branch, as members also attended the Dinners of Elham Valley Branch and Brabourne & Smeeth Branch.

A big thank you to the 1st New Romney Scout Group, Elham Valley Branch and Brabourne & Smeeth Branch for an excellent evening.



Branch Standard Bearer Peter Lee, with members of the 1st New Romney Scout Group, Reverend Julie Coleman, Mayor of New Romney Councillor Peter Coe and of course the WWII memorial bench

DOVER WHITE CLIFFS BRANCH

The photo shows Branch member and County Vice Chairman Richard Graham (an old boy of the school) presenting Dover Boys Grammar School CCF with their affiliation certificate at their Inspection Day. This is our fifth affiliation and we are now working on getting youth members to join the branch.



Armed Forces Day at Dover went very well and the local population turned out in force to support the troops on 'their day'.



Regards to you all

Tony West

Membership Support Officer



LEST WE FORGET

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

Mr Stanley Wilson	Ashford
Mr Charlie Taylor	Dymchurch & District
Mr Greville Gidley-Kitchin	Kemsing
Mr Raymond Lawrence	"
Mr Mick Mungroosingh	Minster & Monkton
Mr Alan Steer	"
Mr Stanley Cook	Royal British Legion Village
Mrs Vera Marner	Sidcup & Footscray
Mr Stanley Queree	Sittingbourne & Milton Regis
Mr David Howard	Tonbridge



Our deepest sympathies go to their families and friends



KENT COUNTY DIARY OF EVENTS - 2017

AUGUST

Sat	19th-20th	Headcorn Combined Ops Military Vehicle & Air Show *
Sat	26th - 28th	Military Odyssey - County Showground, Detling *
Sun	20th	Standard Bearer Training - Capel Morris Centre
Mon	21st - 3rd	MSO on Leave
Thu	31st	Pedal to Paris - Greenwich to Dover stage

SEPTEMBER

Sat	16th - 17th	Salute to the '40s - Chatham Historic Dockyard *
Sun	17th	Standard Bearer Training - Capel Morris Centre

OCTOBER

Sun	8th	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
Fri	10th	Dover Festival of Remembrance
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)
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JANUARY 2018

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

Updated: 31st July 2017