



## BANWELL NEWSLETTER April 2020

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### Chairman's Foreword

At the time of writing I must remark on how nice and pleasant it is to go out and feel the sun on ones back. (Not lasting for long.) A lot has changed since I first put pen to paper.

I wish to thank all members that turned out for the Social evening on February 20<sup>th</sup> - it gave me a tremendous boost and sense of pride in what I and the Committee are doing for the RBL in Banwell.

Yes you can say half of people in attendance were guest poppy collectors and friends but the majority were Banwell RBL members. Thank You.

I would like to see a similar turn out at our Branch meetings so that everyone has an opportunity to provide ideas on how the Branch can support its members and therefore a say in how we can use the money to greater effect.

Plans were going well for the VE day celebrations but now have been cancelled. We will need to see what is being done nationally so watch this space.

The trips that our Branch Secretary is organizing were going well but are now postponed. The National Arboretum weekend is under review as it is so far ahead. The April lunch has now been postponed until further notice but we do hope to hold it as soon as we are able.

You may recall that in the first Newsletter we announced that we would trial a quarterly newsletter over 4 editions. This is our 4<sup>th</sup> edition and I would now like your feedback as to whether you feel it is worth our while, and expense, in continuing with this publication. Please respond either directly to myself or Gill.

I couldn't finish without reference to the 'C' word as it has affected our lunch and trips this year. I originally wrote this foreword before it all took hold and everyone will have received countless emails or communications in papers etc so you all know what to do. I am just sorry that we have had to cancel so much but it is the right thing to do. The committee will review everything on a regular basis and keep you informed. In the meantime keep safe everyone and 'KEEP WASHING HANDS'. If there is anything we can do to help in any way please do not hesitate to contact me. If we can help we will. If we can't well we can talk and support you.

I look forward to seeing you at our Branch meetings when all this is over.

Tom  
Your Chairman

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## From the editor

This is the fourth of our newsletters and what a lot has happened in between! Where do I start. Later in the newsletter you will see an update on the Veterans ID cards albeit not much to report. A number of trips were organised but now have either been cancelled, postponed or are under review and will update you as the situation with the coronavirus develops. As the Chairman has said we will keep you in the picture as much as we can without bombardarding you with information. I shall keep the Notice Board on the Village Hall wall up to date but I appreciate not all of you can get to that.

We have had a variety of directives from the RBL HQ. This has come from our National Chair and we have been asked to share with you our members.

*"I am sorry to say that we have had to make the decision to cancel this year's Annual Conference in its current form. We will be exploring other options and next steps and will keep you informed of our plans around this. We have been considering this as the Covid-19 situation has been unfolding, balancing the desire to mitigate any cost of cancellation with a timely decision.*

*The Government has been very clear in their advice on self-isolating and social distancing, and as per my recent email to you, we are strongly encouraging all our members to follow the advice given.*

*I know many of you will be disappointed by this, as am I, but we really feel it is in the best interests of our members, volunteers and employees' health and wellbeing.*

*With regards to the VE Day commemorations, we will let you know when we have more information from the Government and what they are planning to do given the pandemic.*

*We will continue our discussions and planning for how we can support our local communities through our operations and members. We will of course continue to keep you updated as we work through this challenging time."*

We have also been advised to avoid any home visits to members and explore all options of providing support remotely such as by phone, Skype etc. Our telephone buddy service is a vital route through which we can check that individuals in our community feel supported; are safe and well; and continue to have a connection.

We have been asked to make regular telephone contact to anybody who we or you know are, or maybe, particularly vulnerable at this time. We need to make sure that everyone has sufficient food and access to their medication, as well as the reassurance that their needs are being considered. The Royal British Legion has an important role to play in ensuring that if the most vulnerable in our society need to be more socially isolated, they will not be forgotten and a friendly voice is at hand

If you become very concerned about an individual, please do not hesitate to contact us on 0808 802 8080 and Area Welfare Team can provide appropriate support. That is a national number but Tom and Dennis can be contacted on **01934823842 and 01934823340** respectively. By the time you receive this newsletter you will probably had the information about the support that is being set up in Banwell so many of you should have a good support network. I too can be contacted but email is always my preferred means of communication [Gill\\_Fawcitt04@yahoo.com](mailto:Gill_Fawcitt04@yahoo.com)

That also brings me on to a subject touched on by the Chairman. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> newsletter of our trial year and we do need feedback either to Tom or myself. I would like feedback please on a) whether you want a newsletter b) are you happy with the format of this newsletter c) is this the right frequency ie 4 a year and d) any other comment you might want to make.

I send out the newsletter by email to all but 12 people to whom it is either delivered by hand or sent by post. If any of you receive it by hand or post but have an email I could use then please let me have it if you don't mind. It saves on postal costs and would mean you would receive the newsletter faster.

I can only echo the Chairman now and say **keep safe**. We are in for a long haul and nobody knows when it will end.

**Gill Fawcitt**

## **A Story or anecdote**

**In 1961 I was in the Band of the Middle East Air Force based in Cyprus.** We travelled all over the Middle East, to Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Aden, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Khartoum, Libya and Malta to name but a few.

ON one trip we were flying to Libya to a place called El Adam 18 miles from Tobruk in the desert a horrible little place. As we were preparing to land we had a problem because when the pilot put the wheels down 3 green lights should appear on the control panel, which indicates that the wheels are locked, but the lights did not appear. The pilot dare not land in case the wheels collapsed and he would have to land on the belly of the plane.

The Air Quartermaster had a paper cup. He sat at the back of the aircraft with the cup in his hand and said " I will throw the cup in the air and when it hits the floor BRACE". We had a practice. Then the pilot flew around El Adam burning fuel for about 30 minutes.

We could see the fire crew spraying the runway with foam. Then came the instruction that we were going in. The Air Quartermaster sat with his paper cup, we all had our hands behind our heads, we were skimming the runway when all of a sudden there was a loud bang and we were climbing again. The pilot had put the wheels down and banged them on the runway. This had locked the wheels and the green lights came on!

We circled once more and then landed successfully.

Afterwards we saw the pilot and crew in the bar. "If that was your idea of a bloody joke it certainly worked" we said. "What the hell do you think we're drinking this for" he said holding up his whisky.

The aircraft was a Hastings. When we flew in it we always faced the back.

**Barry Taylor RAF Music Services 1954 – 1974**

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## **Update on the new Veterans ID Cards**

A new ID card for armed forces veterans has started to be issued to service leavers, according to the Government.

The cards will allow veterans to easily verify their service to the NHS, their local authority, and charities. The aim is to help them to access services where needed.

The IDs will also save local authorities and other bodies from having to conduct time-consuming checks to identify individual veterans.

'We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the ex-forces community, and we are working hard to ensure they receive the support they deserve,' said minister for defence people and veterans Tobias Ellwood.

'These new cards celebrate the great commitment and dedication of those who have served this country, and I hope they can provide a further link to ex-personnel and the incredible community around them.'

Any personnel who have left the military since December 2018 will automatically be given one of the new ID cards. All other veterans will be able to apply for a new card by the end of 2020.

## Branch Community Support News from Dennis Cruze

The Branch Community Support continues to work well in the village and I continue to be grateful for the help of you all in enabling this work to be carried out in our community. Below is a table that gives our activities from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019. For a small Branch we continue to do extremely well. So, thank you for your support. May I ask again for help in this Newsletter. If you are able to offer a few hours in helping Tom and I with visiting and phone calls please contact me on 823340 or [denniscruze@btinternet.com](mailto:denniscruze@btinternet.com). We would be very grateful.

### Branch Community Support Statistic for Somerset Branches

Quarter 4 1 October to 31 December 2019

Total Number of Visits	How many clients visited	Total Expenditure	How many telephone buddies called	Bereavement Support Assistance Given	Local Touchpoints	Awareness Events Held
271 (257)	160 (101)	£33.10 (£125.80)	148 (222)	25 (35)	17 (10)	79 (57)
<b>Banwell Branch Community Support</b>						
8	2	Nil	12	0	0	2

You are our eyes and ears, so should you know of anyone that needs assistance with a visit or a phone call, then, please contact Dennis or Tom. At this time this even more important.

## Poppy Supper

This was held on 20 February to say “thank you” to all those who helped with the National Poppy Appeal which raised £50.2m. 52 people attended of which 21 were members. It was good to see everyone and thanks to all who contributed the food.

Hugh Harding presented certificates to the Sea Cadets and the Army Cadets in recognition of their contributions to the Poppy Appeal and are pictured below.



Below are a variety of pictures taken of those who attended.



## **Somerset Legion House (SLH)**

This is the latest information on SLH. SLH staff have handed over the keys to the building and it will be on the market by the end of March. The Amenities Fund (currently stands at around £500,000) will be subsumed into the Legions Funds "for the good of our clients". Also all goods in the building belong to the Legion (no matter where they came from).

The Poppy Stone is hoped to be moved to Grove Park in Weston but this needs the approval of North Somerset Council and the Town Council as both have an interest in Grove Park. The Legion has promised to fund the move of the stone.

The Poppy Club Co-ordinator post will now go to external recruiting, as the last holder of the position had no wish to take it on. The contract will be for 12 months only and then the idea is to get volunteers to run the club thereafter.

Weston College still has an interest in the property if the price is right. Two Care Homes in the town have apparently put in an offer as has the owner of two hotels in the town.

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## Up Coming Dates that will be continually reviewed

5 April	Mendip Springs Lunch postponed
8 May	VE Day Cancelled
21 May	Branch meeting under Review
18 June	Branch Meeting under review
17 September	Hopefully will go ahead
15 October AGM	Hopefully will go ahead
17/18 October	
National Arboretum weekend	Under Review
10 October dinner	Hopefully will go ahead
19 November	Hopefully will go ahead
December	TBC but maybe we will need a party by then!!

Details of the above can be obtained from Tom Couch, 823842, or Gill Fawcitt, Gill\_Fawcitt04@yahoo.com

The Committee will continue to monitor all meetings, trips and meals and keep you in the picture as much as possible.

The result of the small survey we did for where people wanted to go on trips resulted in the following suggestions: Blenheim Palace and the flower show, Royal Mint in Cardiff, National Arboretum, Fleet Air Arm museum, Portsmouth Museum, SS Great Britain, a French Evening in the Village Hall in conjunction with the Twinning Society, Burns Night in the Village hall, Bletchley Park again but there was also a request to keep coach journeys short.

These will now have to be considered for 2021

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## **Next Newsletter**

**If feedback is favourable to having more newsletters**

**July 2020**

**Deadline for articles 12 June 2020**

### **Post Note re Members's questions re the coronavirus**

The RBL have created an email address where members can contact the department if they have any queries about Covid 19 in relation to membership activity. HQ will be regularly monitoring it and will ensure that they provide timely replies. The email address is: memberQs@Britishlegion.org.uk