

CONTACTS PAGE

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County News

**The Newsletter of
Worcestershire
County**

Autumn 2011 Edition

POPPY NEWS

Nationally, in the last twelve months, the Poppy Appeal has raised a record £36m and in Worcestershire has raised £517,670. which represents a 6.65% increase on last year and the first time the county has broken through 1/2 million mark.

In Worcestershire The Royal British Legion have assisted many younger ex-service clients to obtain housing as well as furnish their accommodation. They also support them into work or back into education and training to secure better long-term prospects as well as supporting their families who sometimes struggle to come to terms with the long-term effects suffered by those that have been in the services. This support is also available to those that have been bereaved, not just at the immediate and most difficult time, but long-term.

In Worcestershire, the Poppy Appeal launches on Saturday 29th October outside The Guildhall, High Street, Worcester, starting at 11.45 .There are various events arranged throughout this period within Worcestershire and these are advertised within this newsletter.

In a press release, the County Chairman, Anthony Hartley-Woolley MBE, JP, said "Worcestershire County is pleased to have broken the half million pound figure for the first time, and looks forward to the challenge of increasing this total during the next year's appeal".

1921 Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve **2011**

RIDE TO THE WALL



Oldbury Branch Chairman Geoff Ashwood and his wife Sue Ashwood who is Branch Vice Chair are seen here with their Harley Davidson Sportster at the fourth annual RIDE TO THE WALL that took place on Saturday 1st October 2011. RTTW is an important event that was founded in 2008 by Martin Dickinson formerly Royal Corps of Transport, who had an idea for motorcyclists to ride from across the country to the NATIONAL MEMORIAL

ARBORETUM to pay their respects and remembrance to the fallen of our county's men and women in the line of duty. Over the four years since it began Geoff has attended all four of the rides and Sue has been to the last three. The first ride was around 2500 riders and over the short time has risen to over 10,000 motorcyclists taking part, and is now an important item on the motorcycling calendar. This event has raised in excess of £100,000 to go toward the upkeep of the NMA. Geoff and Sue are long-time members of the Royal British Legion and also have taken up dual membership by joining the Riders Branch, Geoff joined the Riders Branch in 2008 and Sue later in 2010. Geoff and Sue have been keen motorcyclists since they met in 1965 when they formed a club calling it The CONROD CLUB and they still are in touch with some of the members In 1967 Geoff joined the Royal Corps of Transport and during his time with 27 Sqn RCT was put in charge of motorcycle maintenance in his own workshop. Geoff and Sue married in 1970 and finally left the Army in 1973. First joining the RBL in 1974 in Old Hill they then moved to Cambridgeshire and had his membership transferred to Fordham Branch where he became active on the branch committee until 1986 when they returned home and had his membership transferred to Oldbury Branch and soon became involved in the Club side, until 1995 when he became a member of the Branch Committee and has been Standard bearer for one season and five years Vice Chairman then Chairman for the last three years. Both Geoff and Sue are County Case Workers and also look after their two young grandchildren full time. Sue worked at RAF Cosford and then at the TAVR Carters Green, until she retired last year.



PERSHORE PLUM FESTIVAL.

On 29th August, members from Pershore branch, assisted by County staff and committee attended Pershore Plum Festival. Ken Tallis of Pershore Branch commented " This event was not only as part of our recruitment program, but was aimed at putting the face of The Royal British Legion back on the map in Pershore. As a branch we are pleased to be involved with the cadet units in the area."



The branch thanks Birmingham County for the use of their MDU, and those who staffed it.

NATIONAL LIFE MEMBER

On Saturday 15th October, at the County Quarterly meeting, John Worrall, treasurer for Rubery & Rednal Branch, was presented with a National Life Membership Award, by Martyn Tighe, Board of Trustee member.

John joined The Royal British Legion in 1975, but due to shift work he was unable to take an active role until 1980, where he started to assist with the Poppy Appeal. He joined the committee of Rubery and Rednal branch in 1982 and has served in many positions.

In 2004 John became the organiser for Group 5 in Worcestershire and is currently the treasurer for the newly amalgamated Groups 5 & 6.

John was awarded a Branch Certificate in 1996 and then a County Certificate in 1999. In 2000 he became the one of only a few associate members in the Group to receive a Gold Badge.

Despite his disabilities, John strives to help ex-service members of the community, regularly visiting those who are sick, and taking members to hospital or doctor's appointments. John regularly gives talks to local schools on the Poppy Appeal and Legion history. For the last six years he has acted as an assistant carer to a D-Day Veteran, visiting Normandy for the D-Day commemorations.



CLAINES RBL POPPY AWARDS EVENING & 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A joint Poppy Awards Evening and 90th Anniversary Celebration evening was held on 8th July at Claines RBL Club, Worcestershire. Approximately 60 awards were presented by the Worcester RBL County Chairman Tony Hartley Woolley. 6 of the awards were from St John's & Hallow (a sub-branch of Claines RBL). Before presenting the awards Tony Hartley- Woolley said that over £35 million (£½ million in Worcestershire) had been collected so far this year for the Poppy Appeal—well on the way to the £90 million target for this anniversary year and all credit due to the volunteers.

Dave Waldron, Claines Branch Chairman, remarked that not only was this year the 90th Anniversary of the Legion but it was also 65 years since the formation of Claines Branch. Many awards were presented including to Mrs Janet Crowe (St John's & Hallow) & Howard Jones (Claines) for 30 years of helping the Poppy Appeal, Sue Nixon & Malcolm Nixon (both Claines) 35 years, Betty Meek & Joan Senter (both Claines) 40 years and Mrs Sylvia Duggan (Claines) for **50** years of collecting for the Poppy Appeal.

After the presentation of awards there was a social evening and buffet put on by the Branch to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Legion.



Mrs Sylvia Duggan receiving her 50 year award from Tony Hartley-Woolley, County Chairman.

STOKE WORKS & HANBURY BRANCH

Stoke Works Social Club was the venue for a social evening on Wednesday 5th October, at which Stoke Works & Hanbury Branch presented a total of 10 Poppy Appeal Award Certificates.

Greta Hedges and Cliff Hedges were both awarded with 25 year certificates, Sylvia Ashmore and Betty Wolsey for 20 years, Janet Owen for 5 years while Bill Manning, Jack Asmore, Freda Moran, and Doreen Wyres got certificates for in excess of 20 years service. The widow of Danny Garland was presented with his certificate, again for in excess of 20 years service.

NEW COUNTY CHAPLAIN.



Sadly Reverend Canon David Salt, County Chaplain since 2008, recently announced his imminent move to Wiltshire to be nearer his family. On Saturday 15th October, at the County Quarterly meeting, a County Certificate of Appreciation was presented to David by the County President AVM Bob Honey.

Neil Bennett, Branch Chaplain of Lickey End Branch, has agreed to take over the role. Neil is the minister of Catshill Baptist Church, and comes from London where he trained for ministry at Spurgeon's college. Whilst in London Neil served as the Associate minister at Salem Baptist Church Hillingdon Heath before his appointment at Catshill. Neil has had a

great deal of experience in Chaplaincy serving as a Chaplain to Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service, as a hospital Chaplain with specific responsibility for mental health, and as a Police Chaplain, as such Neil has a good understanding of both the public and private role of a Chaplain.

Neil is actively involved in the life of the community at Catshill and is well known for his commitment to the people of the village. Neil feels truly honoured to have been appointed as County Chaplain and is looking forward to meeting people and serving the Royal British Legion in Worcestershire. Neil is an effective communicator with a real and deep pastoral heart believing that relationships are far more important than reputation. Neil is married to Karen and they have two children, Christopher (12) and Hannah (6), they also have a very lively chocolate springadore named Max (3)



COUNTY WEBSITE

Don't forget to visit our Website on a regular basis for all the latest news.

www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/worcestershire/groups--branches

WHAT'S ON IN THE COUNTY

Wednesday 16th November

2011 @ 1930hrs

A talk from Charlotte Webb



Bromsgrove Sports & Social Club

Worcester Road

This event is open to anyone and entrance is free, however all donations will be split 50-50 between the Bromsgrove Branch of the RBL and Friends of Bletchley Park

The bar will be open and snacks available

Poppy Appeal County Launch The Guildhall Worcester . 29th October 2011

1130 onwards Standard Bearers, Cadets and Cast from WMTC show gather in front of the Guildhall.

1145 Participants are arranged on both sides of the Guildhall steps in preparation for the launch - Shaun McCarthy

1155 Opening Speech by on behalf of Royal British Legion by County Chairman Tony Hartley-Woolley inviting the Mayor to Launch this years appeal

Bugler – sounds last post

Exhortation – will be carried out by Bob Honey –

Poppy Drop

Kohima Epitaph – will be carried out by Teresa Scully.

Bugler – sounds reveille

County Chairman thanks those gathered.

On Saturday 29th October the Bewdley Branch are holding a concert in St Annes Church, Bewdley featuring the Kidderminster Male Choir. At the start of the concert, standards are paraded in the church and we would be pleased if Branches would support the event and also parade their standards. A local man David Lawrence who has sung in West End musicals will also be appearing if he is available. The concert starts at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £8 which includes a glass of wine in the interval. Last years concert which also featured the Kidderminster Male Choir was a great success but it would be nice if more Branches supported the event. St Annes Church is in the town centre of Bewdley and nearby parking is free after 6.30pm.

LIFE OF A SILVER BUGLE

As a postscript to Bill Goode's excellent article in the last County Newsletter, Patrick Smith, Chairman of Bromsgrove branch, has reported "The bugle is valued at £2,000.00 for the instrument alone, however with the story and its history I have been informed that it could go for treble that. It was made at Glover's of Aldershot. I am looking at having it played on the 11th Nov outside the Oddfellow memorial and hopefully again on the service on the Sunday."

WORCESTER MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

The Worcester Musical Theatre Company have chosen to support The Poppy Appeal this year Molly Martin, from the WMTC explained.

This year, the WMTC has created a brand new show filled with well known songs, fantastic dancing, and hosted by Hereford and Worcester DJ Tony Fisher. The show is 'Oh What a Night' and runs at the Swan Theatre from Friday 11th November to Saturday 19th November.

Our company is a hive of local talent. Our choreographer is Simon Hundley who recently took his local production of 'Billy Elliot' to London's West End. We have 75 children from Claines School taking part in the shows, plus a talented onstage cast of over 40 singers and dancers. This show is truly something for everyone.

We chose the Royal British Legion mainly because it is the 90th Anniversary of the poppy appeal. Also some of our members have family members in the armed services, and with 75 children involved we thought this was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the Poppy Appeal with a group of young people.



Cast, and 75 children from Claines School.

ARTICLES FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

As this is **your** newsletter if you have any news or forthcoming events then please send them to the County Press Officer. It is intended to publish a newsletter on a quarterly basis, so we need input from our members and branches. The articles are normally included on the County Website as well.

Alan Kelly.

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