



Central News – Mar 2022

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Important dates	
25 March 2022	Membership Council elections: deadline for returning ballot papers in SE Midlands
1 April 2022 (5pm)	Annual Conference: deadline for registering delegates
7 April 2022	Board of Trustees elections: deadline for returning ballot papers
9 April 2022	Membership Meet-Up - Saltash
10 April 2022	National Youth Standard Bearers competition

Please remember to use this [online form](#) to share your feedback about Central News. Some of you reported that not all links in the previous issue worked correctly. Please email kbrzeska@britishlegion.org.uk with details of any links you cannot access.

Annual Conference 2022

Register your delegates and visitors now

The deadline for delegates is fast approaching so please make sure your delegates are registered by **1st April** to be able to attend and vote on behalf of your Branch. To register, please complete the form on the Membership Administration Portal ([MAP](#)) or contact your MSO to provide you with the form you'll need to complete and return to annualconference@britishlegion.org.uk. To register as a visitor please submit this [form](#).



The Conference will take place from 13-15 May at the award-winning Queen Elizabeth II Centre, located in central London and easily accessible by public transport.

This will be the first conference with in-person attendees after the pandemic so don't miss your chance to meet other members face to face.

As part of the business of Conference, delegates will be able to debate and vote on Motions. All attendees online and offline can join the Membership Forum to ask their questions. The National Chairman, the Director General as well as other RBL representatives, will share the latest updates regarding the RBL's strategy while special guests will also speak on matters such as the Falklands War.

There will also be other activities taking place, with the first one being the Women's Section Standard Bearers' Competition that will start at 9.30am on Friday 13th May, followed by the full Standard Bearers' Competition at 2.30pm. All delegates and visitors are welcome to attend.

A plethora of RBL teams, as well as other exhibitors will have stands in the exhibition area, giving everyone an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about all aspects of the RBL. Some of the teams that will be present are the Poppy Shop, NMA, Accounts, Membership, MAP, Admin, Legacies, Legal, Audit and Event Planning. There will also be forums for Overseas Branches, National Branches and the Women's Section.

The Parade will take place on Sunday 15th May and all participants are required to register in advance as visitors or delegates for safety and security purposes.

Participants will gather in King Charles Street and then the Parade will move into Whitehall, passing the Cenotaph before turning left into Horse Guards Parade. Wreaths will be laid at the Cenotaph, the Earl Haig Memorial and the Women of World War Two Memorial.



Membership Meet Ups

The Membership Meet Ups are back this year, and we are starting with an event at the China Fleet Country Club in Saltash (PL12 6LJ) on Saturday 9th April.

We have an exciting programme of workshops and presentations about training and new Learning Management System, Branch Community Support and community development as well as Legion campaigns.

You will also have the opportunity to meet teams responsible for finance, fundraising and Membership Administration Portal, speak to the local area team, grab some goodies from the Poppy Shop stall and speak to members from other branches to share your experience, successes and ideas.

Find out more and register to attend [here](#), and don't forget to encourage your members to come along!

Independent Examiner Training

Take the Independent Examiner course and refresher online

All Independent Examiners are invited to renew their qualification by taking the refresher course online. If you are interested in becoming an Independent Examiner the full course is now available and you can book your place by emailing membershiptraining@britishlegion.org.uk

Please share this with any members of your Branch that are Independent Examiners or interested in becoming Independent Examiners.

Board of Trustees election

Deadline to submit ballot papers changed

The RBL is holding elections this year for its National Officers and for the Board of Trustees and an election Pack was sent to all branches in late autumn last year which set out both the timetable for the elections and the process that would be followed.

There has been a change to the timetable with the deadline for Branches to return completed ballot papers being moved from 5pm 31st March 2022 to **5pm 7th April 2022**. This change is required to provide sufficient time to ensure that all potential candidates are fairly and properly assessed.

This change also means that compliant Branches should expect to receive their ballot packs a little later than previously advised as they will now start to be sent out from 28th February 2022. Provided that your branch is eligible to vote, you should expect to receive the pack no later than Friday 11th March 2022. If you do not receive your pack by Friday 11th March 2022 or if you have any other questions, please contact us on our dedicated elections email: TrusteeElections@britishlegion.org.uk

We understand that some branches will have arranged meetings where discussions and decisions on these elections will take place and that some of these meetings might need to be re-arranged by the later arrival of ballot packs. Please accept our apologies if this impacts you and your branch.

HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

RBL Events for HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

This year, the Royal British Legion joins, along with the rest of the UK, in celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of our Sovereign, the RBL's Patron, HM The Queen. The RBL's membership are (is) encouraged to work in their local communities to mark this important occasion, in collaboration with the Lord Lieutenant and/or local authority and other groups in their areas where appropriate to do so.

It may be that opportunities arise for some people to attend some of the national events and these will be communicated through the normal channels if and when they become available. However, the RBL has no role to play in the ceremonial on the national level, so members are asked to concentrate their efforts in their local area.

We have produced a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document where branches can find guidance and advice on arranging celebrations in their communities. FAQ can be accessed on the [Membership Administration Portal](#) or through your Membership Support Officer.

Free wills

Free Wills Month is now on!



The month of March marks Free Wills Month – a brilliant service which we offer to our members, your friends, family, and anyone in your network, as a thank you for your membership and support over the years.

A Will is a vital part of getting your affairs in order and Free Wills Month can help you in doing just that. If you haven't written your Will yet or want to update an existing Will, this is a great opportunity to get it done at no expense to you. It's easy to draw up or amend a Will, and though we hope you'll leave a gift to the RBL in your Will, you're under no obligation to do so.

So, if you, your partner, or someone you know is over 55, you can find a solicitor near you to draw up a Will – or amend an existing Will – completely free of charge. It's easy to register – just go to the [Free Wills Month website](#) and find a participating solicitor in your area.

If you are 55 or under and therefore unable to take advantage of Free Wills Month, please don't worry as we also offer other Free Will Writing services that are open to all. You can: request the details of a local solicitor to write or amend your Will for free by completing our [online form](#); complete you Will online with our trusted partner, Farewill by clicking [here](#); or request a telephone appointment to complete your Will over the telephone [here](#).

Someone who's already drawn up their Will using the Free Wills service is Janet, a Branch member

said “*The Free Wills Network provided me with a marvellous solicitor whose experience meant it was an easy process handled with sensitivity. It was important to me to help the RBL continue their support of the Armed Forces community.*”

If you have already pledged a gift in your Will to the RBL, or would like a copy of our Will Guide, please click [here](#) to let us know.

Got a question about Free Wills Month or our Will writing service? Please email legacies@britishlegion.org.uk or call 0345 845 1945, and we'll be happy to help.

Falklands 40

This year sees the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict and the RBL is planning a national commemorative event at the National Memorial Arboretum in June. The anniversary also gives our Counties and Branches the opportunity to bring communities together in commemoration. We have produced a Falklands 40 information pack which we hope you will find useful. You can access it on the [Membership Administration Portal](#) or through your Membership Support Officer.

Please note this is for internal use only and should not be passed to partners who are not members of the RBL. A separate pack has been produced for our partners and will be sent to Local Authorities and Regimental Associations. If you would like a copy of the external information guide for local use please contact your MSO.

Media Request from The Times

The Times Newspaper are on the search for any potential last surviving WW1 widows for a piece they are running this weekend. They are looking to pay tribute to Sheila Hoole who sadly passed away on 6th February 2022 aged 108. The family claim she is probably the last surviving widow of anyone who served in WW1. The Times wanted to see if the RBL network knew of any last surviving widows across the UK.

If you know of anyone else who might be a WW1 widow, please let the RBL PR Team know by emailing Senior Public Relations Officer, Charlene Guy via cguy@britishlegion.org.uk

A celebration of Shelia Hoole's life will be held at Tunbridge Wells Crematorium on Wednesday 9th March at 3.15. Family flowers only. Donations may be made to Royal British Legion via <http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/SheilaHoole>

Membership Department Update

As previously mentioned, on the 1st March the Membership Support Officers (MSOs) were transferred to the Membership Directorate. Alison Bunn, Head of Membership Engagement, has appointed five Membership Engagement Supervisors who were selected from the existing MSOs; this means that they retain their MSO role but at the same time act as a supervisor for a team of MSOs.