**EKVN - RBL Report May**

The latest of our popular films/events of the year, an illustrated talk by John Webster of the Air Transport Auxiliary museum in aid of the Poppy Appeal held on the 20th March, was extremely well supported with over 60 people attending. Titled ‘Grandma Flew Spitfires’ it told the story of the civilian volunteers who ferried all categories of aircraft, from Lancasters to small RAF trainers, around the UK during WW2. Many were women, several pilots had an arm missing so there were many interesting stories to be told. In all the evening raised just over £300 for the Poppy Appeal for which these events have become an invaluable addition to our fundraising portfolio.

**EVENTS**

It will be a busy summer for our Branch with a number of events and important commemorations being held.

The first, a short service of remembrance on the 6th June at the EK war memorial to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, will be led by the Rev Kate McFarlane and commence at 1045. All are welcome.

As previously notified in the last newsletter, our current Branch Standard is to be retired after close to 100 years service. A joint laying up and dedication service for the old and new Standards is scheduled for the 28th June at St. Mary’s, East Knoyle. More details to follow nearer the date.

A ‘behind the scenes’ visit to the Gartell Light railway will take place in early July and will include a short talk on its history, a tour of the engine sheds and a half hour ride around the railway.

Supporters of the Poppy Appeal will be pleased to hear that the annual ‘Strawberry and Pimms Tea’ is to be held on its traditional date - the day following the annual EK Flower and Vegetable show in August on the lawn of the village hall. Open to all this event is held as a thank you to the village for all their support of the work of the RBL during the year.

Later in the year, Sir John Blashford-Snell has agreed to give a talk at Semley village hall on the 27th September. In addition to the above, several other interesting events are in development and more information will follow in due course.

**POPPY APPEAL**

Since our last report, the total for the 2023/24 appeal has been boosted to £9,147.75.

**MEMBERSHIP**

I hope this report demonstrates once more that we are an active and sociable small Branch that strongly supports the work of the RBL and its Poppy Appeal. In the last few months we have been pleased to welcome four new members. If you wish to join - you can devote as much or as little of your time as circumstances permit, your membership alone will help sustain our work - please look at the RBL website (rbl.org.uk) or phone (0808 802 8080) and be sure to quote our Branch code - BR2581.

Next Branch meeting: Tuesday 4th June, 6.30pm, Fox and Hounds