

## Minutes from: Newent & District Branch of the Royal British Legion

### Held 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 at Newent Memorial Hall

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Vice Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
Mary Curtis	Secretary
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Rick Axon	Bar & Entertainments Member
David Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Elaine Balding	
Colin Calcutt	
Edward Davy	Guest
Harvey Hopkins	Guest
Nathan Stringer	Guest
Dawn Burke	Guest

#### **1. Act of Remembrance.**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked us to think of those who could not be with us tonight due to ill health, especially for our branch Padre who is currently isolating, and we wish Sarah Davy well who is also isolating. He welcomed our guests who are here for the presentation of the John Edward Whitehall Trophy including Edward, Nathan and Harvey. He asked that as today is the UK National Day of Reflection that we take the opportunity to remember our loved ones who've died, that we support family, friends, colleagues and neighbors' who are grieving and so connect with each other. He then went on to read the names of those from the Parish of Newent who lost their lives during WW1 and WW2 during the month of April and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received from Colin Britt, Susanne Britt, Adrian Dover, Simon Mason, Sue Colborne, Sue Urch, John Price and Pat Price.

#### **3. Chairman's Report.**

##### **Introduction.**

My report this month is fairly short but I will start with local news:

##### **Welcome to Newent – Mail Drop.**

Everything is in place now for when St Mary's send out their 'Welcome to Newent' mail drop, the leaflets have been produced and will be made for distribution at tonight's meeting, thanks to all those that offered the use of Guillotines, the leaflets from RBL HQ came through so can also be put with the mail drop items. My thanks to Simon and St Mary's for giving us the chance to 'piggy back' onto their scheme.

##### **Memorial Service – Fred Sandbach**

Thank you to all those that turned out for the Memorial Service of Fred Sandbach, in total 23 people attended to honor the life and service of this old soldier, special thanks go to John Strong of the Buglers Association and St Mary's Church campanologists, Simon and Pat for conducting the service, Graham for managing to stay upright for the whole service and Keith's due diligence in his research and liaison of Fred's life.

### **John Edward Whitehorn Trophy.**

The Presentation for this year's John Edward Whitehorn Trophy will take place directly after my report, I'd firstly like to congratulate both the winners this year and both the sponsors and of course to Edward who is here to present the trophy as his mother is unable to be here. The winners will receive a Glass Paperweight as a keepsake, they have decided that the Trophy will be kept at the "Chillout" for the next 10 Months.

### **King Charles III – Coronation.**

Last month Newent Town Council (NTC) could not tell us what events were planned for the Coronation weekend, however, most of you will have seen on social media that an event has now been organised for Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May which is entitled 'Coronation, Culture & Community' a community festival in Newent Town Centre have Arts and Craft workshops, food and drink, street performances, dog show, live music, silent disco, market stalls, and a live stream of the Coronation with more information coming the near term. Also, our Padre has told me that there will be a Coronation service in the guise of a civic service on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May, no parade but uniformed services will be invited and Standards will be in attendance, once again more details will follow.

### **Request from Chairman of Cinderford Branch.**

I was contacted this week by the Chairman of the Cinderford Branch with a request for support for a couple of events they like to arrange, the request reads:

***"I'm just putting the feelers out to all branches to see what your members think. We have two social events planned and looking at the interest. These events being:***

***1 – Much Marcle Weston Cider factory tour***

***2 – Cheltenham Siblings Gin Tour***

***We Just need to know as we need to look at either planning a 16- or 32- seater"***

A quick show of hands was displayed for possible support to each activity, 8 members present with a possible 4 others showed their support, the Chairman will pass on to the Cinderford Branch Chairman the numbers he could expect from the branch.

### **Items of interest from County.**

#### **County Briefing.**

The County Briefing will take place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April at 13:00 hrs at Frampton Cotterell RBL club. At this meeting, the County Chairman will report back what was said at the recent Chairman's Seminar and give the presentation from that meeting. The Chairman stated that he was planning to attend and invited anyone else interested to join him, no volunteers were noted.

#### **ANZAC Day.**

An ANZAC day service is being planned for the 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The County Chair is currently finalising details of the event, detail will follow once set. All branches are encouraged to attend.

### **Armed Forces Day 2023.**

The South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day is taking place in Page Park, Staple Hill this year on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June. Branches, standards and veterans that would like to attend the event should click the following link to book a pitch or advise they are taking part in the parade – [www.southglosafd.com](http://www.southglosafd.com)

### **Branch Membership 2023.**

Branch membership has dropped for the 4<sup>th</sup> month in a row, Keith will give you this month's number during his report, but if anyone has ideas on how to recruit new members, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it.

### **Finally**

Don't forget that as normal if anyone needs help in any way at all please do not hesitate to get in contact, and if we can help, we will.

#### **4. Presentation of The John Edward Whithorn Trophy.**

The Trophy has been kindly presented by Edward Davy the grandson of John Edward Whitehorn, as his mother is unable to attend due to having to isolate prior to an operation.

Edward started with talking about fond memories of his grandfather and how he told him tales of his time in the Army which was suitable for a children's ears and how he had a great fondness for children and their resilience. Edward also said he had read both the nominations of the winners and told them that he also thought they were worthy winners of this trophy.

He then gave them both the trophy that they have agreed that they will keep in the Chill Out Zone for the next 10 months as they both go there and it will be good for the younger community member to see. The Photograph below was taken of Edward and one of the winners:



#### **5. Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising.**

The minutes of the Branch meeting on 23 February 2023 were examined and adopted as a true and accurate record, with no matters arising.

Proposed by KU and seconded by HA, agreed unanimously.

#### **6. Reports by Officers.**

##### **6.a. Vice Chair/BCSO/Youth Liaison.**

We remember those veterans, friends, family and Branch colleagues currently suffering ill health and experiencing other difficulties: please remember that we are there to assist; you only need to contact one of your Committee Members.

**Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer.**

Members are reminded that those considering support to Branch officers and BCS, assistance is always available.

**Welfare and Membership.**

The Branch continues to aid and support its members and veterans, in the first instant, by signposting them to the National RBL Helpline and by interaction with local community and national organisations.

Members are reminded that The National RBL Helpline telephone number is: 0808 802 8080

And The Veteran's Gateway:

[https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/127/~the-royal-british-legion](https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/127/~the-royal-british-legion)

Please be assured that we will always continue to utilise our local knowledge and contacts to support our member and veterans.

**Branch Membership**

In accordance with TRBL records, Branch Membership currently stands at 35 members, a further reduction in membership, at this time due to forthcoming renewal: those members have been notified by your representative and encouraged to renew.

**Branch Statistics.**

The Branch has provided support to several Member and veterans this period, in particular to those receiving new or revised Personal Independence Payments (PIPs). Further guidance is also available from Veterans UK via telephone – 08438 166330.

Members are reminded that should they identify a comrade in need, they are encouraged to contact a Committee Member or BCS Representative at the earliest convenience. All communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits: 4  
How many beneficiaries visited: 2  
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters): 4  
Total Welfare Expenditure: NIL (see Note 1)  
Telephone Buddies:  
Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive: 16  
Telephone - -How many beneficiaries called: 2  
Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 4

Notes:

1. We still await the outcome of the RBLHQ review of our recent "Crisis Grant".
2. A limited number of email and telephone communications were made to TRBL HQ during this period on behalf of veterans and their families.

## **Community, Youth and Veteran Liaison Activities.**

### **The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy.**

Members are aware the 2 nominations for The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy were received, Nathan and Harvey. This month's meeting will see the joint presentation of this trophy by Edward Davy, member of JEW's family.

### **Corp. Fred Sandbach.**

Fredrick Edward Sandbach; Service No23342639 Ex REME and RAMC  
Fred's Memorial Service took place on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm, St Mary's Church. We welcomed Fred's cousin, local resident Margaret Pollock and his many friends from his time in Newent. Special thanks go to John Strong, of The Bugler's Association, St Mary's and the Bellringers for supporting the event. Due to the inclement weather, the service was held in The Lady Chapel. Bells were rung, "9 Taylors" for his age (Fred was 84 year of age), An RBL REME poppy wreath of flowers was laid at the War Memorial, there followed the Citation and 2 minutes silence. John Strong a Hereford, Regimental Bugler, played Last Post and Reveille: it was extremely moving. The RBL Newent & District Standard was present, but unfortunately, no other RBL Standards were represented. Prayers and Bible reading by the Rev Simon Mason, Rev Pat Phillips and Chairman of Newent and District Branch TRBL.

### **Summary.**

Fredrick Edward Sandbach was born 9<sup>th</sup> April 1938, the son of Fredrick (Paddy) and Fanny Sandbach (nee Watson). Fred was one of seven children, hailing from Gloucester. Upon enlistment in the Army, he was recorded as living in Willow Avenue, Coney Hill, in the Parish of St George, Gloucester.

He played football for Matson AFC, had a love of horses and horse riding, motorcycling, and with his father, apparently kept greyhounds, often attending Longlevens Greyhound Stadium in Gloucester.

**ARMY SERVICE RECORD** – With grateful thanks to Gerry McArdle and Roddy Hay of MoD, SO3, Army Personnel, Centre, Glasgow.

Fred enlisted in Aldershot on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1956, his civilian occupation listed as being a railway fireman and his region as C of E.

Having completed his basic training (REME) Private Fredrick Sandbach was transferred to 12 Company, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), attached to the Catering Corps, based at the Royal Hebert Hospital, Woolwich, where he stayed for the duration of his service. He was discharged on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1962.

Extracts from his Service Record highlights his professionalism, exemplary conduct, demonstrating drive and an ambition to succeed, an honest, hardworking and competent individual, showing a very responsible attitude to work. His discharge papers, signed by The Officer Commanding, 12 Company RAMC, strongly recommended him as a person suitable to a senior position.

Having left the Army, Fred developed an interest in market gardening, eventually having a thriving business. He lived in Bromsberrow Heath, Dymock, Ross Willis Court (Newent) and Berkley before finally returning to Newent where he spent his final days.

Fred passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022, aged 84 years at the Highfields Care Home, Culver Street, Newent.

### **Reminder of The Thanksgiving Service for Major General Paul Stevenson OBE RM.**

He was an Aden Veteran and the Gloucestershire Country TRBL Branch President in 2013. While a private family cremation is being arranged in conjunction with the Royal Marines Association, a Thanksgiving Service will take place at St Mary's Church Wotton under Edge on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023 at 15:00 hours. Further information is available from Kate Cropper the Tyndale Benefice, telephone: 01453 842175 and email: [office@tyndalebenefice.co.uk](mailto:office@tyndalebenefice.co.uk)

Note: TRBL Regional and HQ office have been notified.

### **The Buchanan Trust.**

Having again met with the former chairman of The Trust, Andre Bower, the option may exist for The Trust to provide the Branch either with a presentation or visit to the Estate.

The charity's estate at Bosbury, on the other side of Ledbury, has quite a few flats & cottages that are all there to help those that have served. The Veterans Support Manager – Samantha Brittain (ex-Army) contact info is: [sb@buchanan-trust.org.uk](mailto:sb@buchanan-trust.org.uk) and The Trust is: <https://www.buchanan-trust.org.uk>

Should members know of any suitable veterans that would benefit of The Trust's support, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will act as the link- person.

### **Other Matters**

Activities continue on works to upgrade Newent's War Memorial.

Members are reminded that HMG and Service grants remain available for those suffering hardship.

Liaison continues with Newent's youth and community organisations, the aim of which to promote TRBL and its specific activities in around Newent.

### **TRBL HQ, County Liaison and Branch Communications (OS365)**

For further matters relating to other HQ/County/ Branch communications and other local activities, please see your Chairman's and other Representatives Reports.

### **6.b. Treasurers Report.**

There has been no movement on the account since the last meeting. The balance stands at £1026.84

No other Reports by Officers.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **7.a. Military Wives Concert.**

GB has been back to the Innsworth Military Wives Choir and they have requested a flat rate for travel expenses of £40 on top of the fee they charge for the performance that will total to £260.

The Memorial Hall is booked from 1pm, performance time to be arranged. The Hall must be vacated by 5pm as it is already booked for another event.

Tea, coffee & cake to be served at the interval.

Publicity needs to be done as soon as possible to get the number of people to attend that we require.

Various scenarios for running the event were discussed and further information will be given at the next meeting.

### **7.b. Coronation of King Charles III.**

KU (with his Newent Initiative Trust Hat on) has been to a meeting about funding the of the program of events that are planned for the Coronation within the town. They are waiting for conformation on funds, they are hoping to get funds from NTC. National Lottery application has been submitted but has pointed out that there is a stiff competition for the limited funds. Local businesses have also been approached to sponsor some of the event.

The Secretary volunteered to email GB, DP, RA & PP on the advertised events that have been posted on social media.

### **8. Date of Next Meeting.**

The meeting at 19:45 with the next meeting to take place 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7pm in Newent Memorial Hall.

### **Agenda for Meeting of Newent and District Royal British Legion Branch on 27 April 2023.**

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Report
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Any other Business
7. Date of Next Meeting.