



THE
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2022



BR0753



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To Autumn

John Keats - 1795-1821

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;*



Lancaster over Henley 'Trad Boat Festival' photo by Dennis Craggs

*With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.*

Dates for your Diary

Herewith a reminder that the monthly meeting are on the 3rd Tuesday each month, and to advise/remind you of the booking procedure for the monthly talks and lunch, together with the schedule of dates for your diary

- **Venue** - Henley Rugby Club, Menza Restaurant
- **Lunch** - will consist of a delicious main course with an alternative vegetarian dish, scrummy pudding and coffee/tea.
- **Timings** -Talk at 11.15 (please be seated by 11.00) and lunch 12.30.

We very much look forward to seeing you and you are welcome to gather at the bar for a drink from 10.45 am before moving to the adjoining meeting room for the talk and lunch.

Please note that unfortunately, in line with price rises across the board we have had to increase the price of lunch to £18 from July onwards.

NB Booking & Payment must be made by Thursday before the Tuesday lunch.

Book with Karen in the first instance by email kcgrieve@btinternet.com or phone 07990 833241 then

Pay £18 for the lunch preferably by Bank Transfer to:

RBL Henley	or by	Cheque made out to:
A/c 00027756		RBL Henley-on-Thames Branch
Code - 30-94-13		c/o Kathy Bardwell-Springett
Ref - Lunch		Branch Treasurer
		5 The Maltings, Hart Street,
		Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2FE.

PS Car parking is free if you are visiting the restaurant - but you must remember to collect a ticket from the bar and display it in your car.

Events 2022

Bookings are now open for our **September lunch on Tuesday 20 September**, at the Henley Rugby Club's Menza Cafe when our speaker is **Lady Aurelia Young, the daughter of renowned sculptor Oscan Nemon**, whose bronze statue of Sir Winston Churchill stands in the Members' Lobby of the House of Commons. Lady Young will give an illustrated talk on the life of her father as told in her book 'Finding Nemon', which also covers the story of his refuge in Britain from Nazism.


Lunch will be Salmon Roulade and salad followed by summer fruit meringue & cream or cheese & biscuits and will be £18. Please book via return to this email address or call Karen Grieve on 07990833241, **Thursday.**

(Please don't forget to book)

Tuesday 20 September '22 – Auriela Young, An illustrated talk on the life of Renowned Sculptor, Oscar Nemon as told in her book 'Finding Nemon'

Tuesday 18 October '22 – Branch AGM – talk Valerie Alasia, Local Amateur Historian. 'Henley Workhouse – the Story of Townlands'

***Sunday 13 November '22** – Remembrance Sunday Lunch – Masonic Lodge (further details opposite page)

***Monday 19 December '22** – Christmas Lunch - Henley Rugby Lunch 

Tuesday 17 January '23 – Robin Dodd, details tbc

Please note carefully there are 2 events on different week days !

***Sunday November 13th & * Monday December 19th.**

**RBL HENLEY & PEPPARD BRANCH
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY LUNCH
13 NOVEMBER 2022**

We have this year been very fortunate to arrange a joint Remembrance Sunday Lunch with the Henley Masonic Centre and are able to offer members a **Sunday Roast & Dessert or vegetarian option together with a glass of wine and coffee/tea for just £20.**

At a time of escalating prices we are sure you will appreciate that this is an extremely competitive price which has only been possible through the generosity of the Henley Masonic Centre who have offered use of their facilities without charge together with a subsidised lunch.

We have also been able to arrange parking at the Christ Church Centre (opposite) and are grateful to them for their kindness in allowing members to park free at an easy to access location.

Lunch is 12.30 for 12.45 on Sunday 13 November, at the Henley Masonic Lodge, 61 Reading Road, RG9 1DL and we would ask for payment in advance as your booking will only be confirmed once payment has been received.

Booking is now open and we would **advise early booking** for this important occasion in the RBL calendar and what we are sure will be a convivial and enjoyable event.

Booking on-line at henleyonthames.secretary@rbl.community or by phone Karen on 07990833241

Payment by bank transfer to RBL Henley, Account 00027756, Code 30-94-13 add Reference : Lunch

Or cheques made payable to RBL Henley on Thames Branch sent c/o Kathy Bardwell-Springett, Branch Treasurer, 5 The Maltings, Hart Street, Henley on Thames RG9 2FE

We very much hope that you will be able to join us.



**Masonic Lodge
Remembrance Sunday Lunch
61 Reading Rd, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1AE**



**Christchurch Centre Henley - Parking
46 Reading Rd, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1AG**

Parking - The Christchurch Centre carpark on this occasion.

**By kind permission of the Centre and
Minister Glyn Millington**

John Green's Platinum Challenge for Poppy Appeal

In 2021, John Green raised funds for the Royal British League Poppy Appeal by marching 100K in full WW1 uniform. He had been inspired by the late Sir "Captain" Tom's fundraising in for the NHS.

In this Platinum year, John now 87 years old undertook a similar challenge. This time 70K in 70hrs.

In August he ventured out each day bravely dressed again in full WW1 uniform, brandishing a decommissioned rifle, and to show he has fully embraced the 21st Century carried a SumUp machine which takes credit card payments, his latest boy's toy! His Trek started each day from his home in Maidensgrove and back, on a circular route via Blue Tin Produce farm shop and The Black Horse pub in Checkendon.



On Wednesday at his designated stop-over, the Black Horse Pub, John was presented with an award by the **RBL National Vice Chairman Lynda Atkin**, in the presence of Pete Eldridge County Chair of RBL Oxfordshire, Cllr Kelly Hinton of Henley Town Council together with Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak, Catherine Notaras and Chair of RBL Henley & Peppard Branch, Anne Evans. This special award was in recognition of John's phenomenal fundraising for the Poppy Appeal over the years since the 1970's

Please see John's Just Giving page - [Justgiving.com/johngreenplatinumwalk](https://www.justgiving.com/johngreenplatinumwalk) - His page is still open so your support would be appreciated as there is a never-ending call for funds to help ex Service personnel and their dependants in need.



We would like to thank the many people who supported this Challenge, those who were curious and stopped for a chat, those who donated behind the scene, and those who made John so welcome on his 2 designated stops - The Blue Tin Produce and The Black Horse Pub, both in Checkendon.

If you haven't discovered Blue Tin Produce, he can highly recommend a visit, whether for coffee and cake or a more substantial bite to eat and a look round their award winning Farm Shop but be advised they are closed on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays. The Black Horse proprietors have long been staunch supporter of our RBL Branch and huge thank you to them for letting us leave a Poppy Appeal collecting tin with them to great effect, as the merry rattle of coins were as music to our ears. Thank you.

"I was coming back from my dog walk today and spotted this rifle leaning against the bus shelter in Cookley Green. There inside was John Green, dressed in a replica World War I uniform having a little rest. I had seen him yesterday walking along the road near Watlington, then again in the afternoon in Nuffield. I had pulled the car over to have a chat and ended up giving him the contents of my parking money bag. But all to a good cause: The Royal British Legion. He told me that he has nearly raised £1000. What an amazing man!"

By Linda Seward



Former Mayor, Councillor Sarah Miller - Cheque Presentation



Anne Evans - Sarah Miller - John Green
Photo courtesy of the Henley Herald

John Green and Anne Evans were invited to a reception by Sarah Miller to receive a cheque of £3360 for the Branch garnered from her fundraising Mayoral events during her year in office.

We shared the reception with Lucy Bowley, Chairman of Henley Regatta for the Disabled, the second of Sarah's two chosen charities.

As Sarah graciously said "It was really difficult to choose just 2 worthy charities as we have so many charities in Henley, probably around 200. I've known John from the RBL for a long time and I know the hard work that you guys do. I've also got family links with the Legion. I think what you do, and what you keep doing is remarkable. Anne, the local branch is such a good team and there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted your Branch to be one of my charities".

The Branch was not expecting anything like this amount and to get something for the branch for a change is amazing. The Committee will now have to decide how this money will benefit the Branch, our Community and the Poppy Appeal. We have some thoughts, but nothing concrete as yet.

Henley Debt Counselling Centre - Launch of CAP Christians Against Poverty

Four churches in Henley have teamed up to open a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) debt counselling service for people in Henley who are struggling financially.

This initiative was launched on 18 July and will be headed by Olympic rowing silver medal winner, Debbie Bruwer previously Debbie Flood.

"Living with debt or financial worries is extremely difficult. It affects so many areas of people's lives – relationships, physical and mental health, not being able to afford the basic essentials. It can also be very isolating.

"As a compassionate church community, we want to be there to support local people in need, work with them on their route out of debt, providing emotional and practical support every step of the way until they go debt free."



Debbie Bruwer previously Debbie Flood

Although the service is backed by Christians Against Poverty, you don't have to be a Christian to get help. Terry Grouk, Trustee, Henley on Thames Churches Debt Centre said, "Debbie has received extensive professional training from CAP and the Debt Centre hopes to offer not just debt counselling but in the future training courses for people who are sliding into debt and a Job Club to help people into work."

Andy Jones from Henley's Citizens Advice Bureau and Tim Prior, Manager of Nomad Youth & Community Project agreed that there is such a misconception that everyone in Henley is rich! They see struggling families every day, and are excited to be able to refer people to a local set up that provides free, compassionate help to people in real need.

Anne Evans and John Green were invited to the Launch, and feel that with these amazing initiatives growing up in Henley, that we, the local RBL Branch, have an increased chance of locating ex-service men and women and their families who would benefit from help the RBL can offer. We find it difficult to pin-point exactly who in the community needs our help - individuals are proud and therefore 'soldier' on to the detriment of their health and wellbeing. **A plea to CAP, Nomad Citizen's Advice, Branch members and friends in the community. If you know of someone or some bodies, ex service personnel and families who are in need, please refer them to me in the first instance at henleyonthames.chairman@rbl.community. Thank you.** Anne Evans, Branch Chairman

Remarkable men we knew

I wonder how many of this generation now wish they had spoken to their relative about the part they played in the war, both 1st and 2nd ! It's only on their death that the full picture is revealed.

I had the honour of being Bill Green's daughter-in-law but it was only by reading his obituary that I gathered the story of his remarkable life in the Royal Navy and that in the 2nd World War he was principal navigator responsible for getting the small fleet of 19 ships, elite commandos and the destroyer HMS Campbeltown - which was loaded with explosives - up the estuary to destroy the heavily fortified Normandy dry dock at St Nazaire in German-occupied France. He was twice decorated for bravery and outstanding devotion to duty.

By 1941 the war was going badly for England, the convoys bringing food and guns across from America were under constant attack. Hitler planned to send the mighty Tirpitz to wreak further havoc in the Atlantic and knowing that the British would attack and probably damage the Tirpitz, St Nazaire was the only dock which could accommodate Tirpitz's size. So the British plan, conceived and carried out within three weeks, was to destroy the dock.

The revised Combined Operations plan required one destroyer to ram the dock gates and a number of smaller craft to transport the commandos. The Royal Navy would therefore provide the largest contingent for the raid, under the overall command of the senior naval officer, **Commander Robert Ryder**. A mighty dangerous undertaking, which involved loading the Campbeltown, an aged destroyer with a huge amount of explosives and use the ship to ram the gates of the dry dock and blow itself up.



St Nazaire was targeted because the loss of its dry dock would force any large German warship in need of repairs, such as Tirpitz, sister ship of Bismarck, to return to home waters by running the gauntlet of the Home Fleet of the Royal Navy and other British forces, via the English Channel or the North Sea. The Tirpitz never put to sea again!

The attack on St Nazaire has been described as the greatest raid in the 2nd World War, and Lieutenant CI 'Bill' Green especially chosen as principal navigator was pivotal in getting all 19 ships and commandos to the right place at the right time in the middle of the night.

To make it even more remarkable, the convoy set out in daylight and to deceive the enemy headed as if for Gibraltar, only turning to France in the dark, making navigating the narrow estuary an extremely delicate operation.

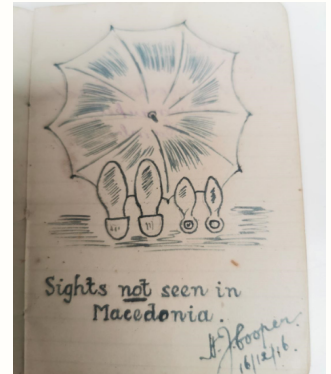
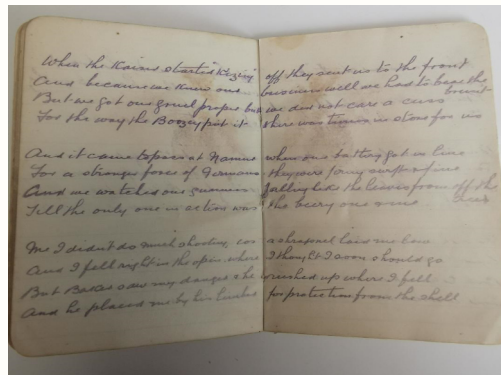
Commander 'Red' Ryder (whoes own bravery won him the Victoria Cross) in a book he wrote after the war about the raid, in his final summary wrote:

'Looking back over the stirring events which I have attempted to describe in the forgoing chapters, I feel that I should now emphasise what was, perhaps, our main worry. The ordinary hazards of navigating a river at night without any lights or buoys would be no easy task after a 450 mile voyage. The fact that Bill Green not only piloted the force unerringly up the Loire but calculated his time of arrival within 4 minutes was one of the major factors contributing to the success of the action.

His ability on this occasion met with unstinted praise from the Loire pilots, who considered this feat of pilotage to be without parallel in the history of the port. Lieutenant Green, who was specially selected for this appointment, also acted as my chief staff officer in all other matters; It is proper, therefore, that his contribution should be fully recorded. To the unsolicited tribute of the Loire pilots I would like to add that Green's ability and assurance on this testing occasion has impressed itself on me as one of the outstanding features of the raid. Anne Evans

"The Man Behind the Gun" STRUMA VALLEY 25/1/1917

This remarkable 2" x 4" notebook was found at a carboot sale in Benson in 1993. It belonged to a gunner (Royal Artillery) serving in Salonika (Thessaloniki) during WW1. Written in a miniscule copperplate hand, it contained a doggerel poem 'The Man Behind the Gun' and cartoons and verses penned by his comrades-in-arms 1916 – 18.



The first page of the notebook is headed "STRUMA VALLEY 25/1/1917 followed by comrades' signatures and the phrase "to be continued in Blighty". We are left to wonder if that ever happened!

The Salonika campaign began 5 October 1915 with the landing of the 10th (Irish) and French 156th Division at Salonika. The rationale for sending troops to the Balkans was to deter Bulgaria from joining Germany and Austro-Hungarian Empire in an attack on Serbia, our ally.

The Struma Valley saw a series of actions against Bulgarian and Turkish positions. The valley was infested with malaria and both sides tried to avoid fixed positions. Malaria was more the cause of incapacity on both sides than enemy fire! The British Forces' newspaper was called the MOSQUITO !

Lancaster over Henley - 'Trad Boat Festival' photos by Dennis Craggs

The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF)

The aircraft can be seen flying at events commemorating the Second World War, at high-profile British state events such as Trooping the Colour and the Queen's birthday, along with regular appearances at UK airshows. Visit the BBMF's website for more information about their display schedule, aircraft and crew.

The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight is a source of national pride. **HM Queen Elizabeth II provided the following tribute to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the**



"There are few sights or sounds able to evoke more powerful thoughts and emotions than that of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flying overhead. To some it commemorates loved ones and relatives who fought and died in the air during the Second World War; to others it is an example of this nation's resilience and indomitable spirit in the face of adversity; for yet others it represents a tangible link between the modern RAF and its illustrious forefathers, and it continues to inspire in many young people a desire to serve this country in the air."

This amazing photograph of the Lancaster flying over the Trad Boat Festival Festival were taken by photographer, Dennis Craggs and included here with his kind permission.

WW2 Peoples's War - Henley on Thames

Contributed by famil Shortt - Henley on Thames - background to story Civilian
(an extract from article ID A6385520) WW2 Peoples War (BBC)



"This photograph shows me, Philip Pengilly, aged 10 and my elder brother Roy, taken in 1939. The uniform is of Henley-on-Thames Trinity Hall Lads Brigade which was given out for monthly church parades and the annual camps which were mostly taken at Beachy Head, Eastbourne.

If memory serves me right, this last camp before the outbreak of war, was also taken at Beachy Head, though it may have been at Felpham, near Bognor Regis. A band always led the various parades and consisted of drum and fife with buglers. The 'gongs' worn were for progress in music, in both cases here, for the flute. Jack Banbury was bandmaster, assisted by Charlie Bund. Charlie Piper was in charge overall with 'Ginger' Talbot second in command.

I was told war had been declared on my way home from singing in our church choir by an older boy, at least 13-years-old, and told to hurry home. Things began to happen with the building of shelters in some roads (in the centre of Station Road for instance) and in the National School's gardens, the issuing of gas masks and the arrival from London, (shouted ell-oh-en-dee-oh-en) loud and clear, of the first group of young evacuees."



This photograph was taken by 541 Squadron possibly from a Gloster Meteor or a Lancaster on 18th June 1945, for mapping purposes after hostilities ceased.

A two day regatta was staged between Victory in Europe Day 8th May and Victory over Japan Day 15th August. (you can see the rowing boats).

This has to be the ultimate "you can see our house from here" picture, assuming you live in Henley on Thames. Even if you don't, compare it with the same area on Google earth.

Download it and pump it up, the detail is extraordinary. If you look closely you can actually see a small RAF plane!

Courtesy WW2Aircraft.net

American soldiers and Henley Grammar School boys on Henley Bridge, May 1944 - courtesy of Tim Kosh

