



THE
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2023



BR0753

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Charles III

Chris Jackson/Getty Images

The Royal British Legion

The RBL is at the heart of a national network that supports our Armed Forces community.

Although the Legion was granted royal patronage from its founding in 1921, it received “Royal” appellation in 1971.

Whether you’re a fundraiser, volunteer, member or proud Poppy Appeal collector – however you choose to support us, we couldn’t do it without you.



Dates for your Diary

Herewith a reminder that the monthly meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday each month, and to advise/remind you of the booking procedure, 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 11.30 (please be seated by 11.20) 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.

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
A/c 00027756
Sort Code - 30-94-13
Ref - Lunch

or by Cheque made out to:
RBL Henley-on-Thames Branch
c/o Kathy Bardwell-Springett
Branch Treasurer - 5 The Maltings, Hart Street,
Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2FE

PS Change to car parking - If you park at the Rugby Club we will collect 50p from you on your arrival and pay it into the club for you. All you need to do is to put a note in the window saying **RBL LUNCH**

Upcoming Events 2023

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Tuesday 18 April | Yanto Evans, Community Fund Raiser for Oxfordshire and veteran of the Falkland War & Close Protection in Afghanistan and Iraq, "Falklands War Experience with 3 Para" |
| Tuesday 16 May | Joanna Bogle, author of "A Life Lived for Others"
The story of Sue Ryder and the woman behind the name. Coronation Lunch |
| Tuesday 20 June | Rory O'Grady, author of "The Flight of the Arctic Fox" which tells the story of the lives of thirty one passengers and crew, including his brother, who perished on board a BEA Vickers Viscount flight from London to Naples in October 1958 |
| Tuesday 18 July | Lynda Atkins, Vice Chair, Royal British Legion |
| Sunday 13 Aug | Visit to Fawley Hill Museum & Railway (this event has been especially created for us so please contact Karen Grieve to book your place). |
| Tuesday 15 Aug | tbc |
| Tuesday 19 Sep | Robin Dodd - photography |
| Tuesday 17 Oct | Jim McWhirter, Retired RAF Medical Officer and Nettlebed GP on the "Rotary Doctor Bank" a medical charity running projects in rural mission hospitals across Uganda with the Rotary Club and his voluntary work running a maternity ward at Kamuli Mission Hospital TBC |
| Sunday 12 Nov | Remembrance Sunday Lunch - Masonic Centre |
| Monday 18 Dec | Christmas Lunch  |

In January our speaker was Robbin Dodd recounting his father's war experiences

It's an old adage but one that two of our recent lunch speakers had obviously asked and now take pleasure in relating the details to wider audiences.

"What did you do in the war daddy"?

In January we welcomed Robin Dodd, a local landscape photographer, whose talk entitled "Exposing the Killer Shot" recounted his father's service in the Special Forces and the UK's spy missions in Berlin during the Cold War years. Whilst the physical divide of The Wall clearly defined boundaries, the Special Forces found ways by stealth and subterfuge to stay one step ahead of the Stazi. Robin's talk shed light on the intrigue and ingenuity of the Special Forces in obtaining intelligence as well as some of their amusing and daring escapades. He explained how these events have not only influenced his photography but what we currently see on our news screens today.



Robin as an award winning photographer also took the opportunity to bring his book of wonderful photographs to share with us.

In February our speaker was Richard Pinches, a Desert Rat re-enactor known as the Lone Rat.

Richard's talk entitled "To El and Back" was a behind the scenes look at the Battle of El Alamein. Richard's father served with the 8th Army (Desert Rats) in North Africa in 1942 during the Second World War.

FATHER AND SON 80 YEARS APART



CAIRO 1942
MY FATHER IS FAR LEFT



CAIRO 2022
ME IN THE SAME LOCATION



Richard is also a member of the Royal British Legion and has worn his father's uniform to fundraise for the Poppy Appeal each November since 2017 during which time he has raised a substantial amount for the Poppy Appeal.



The battlefield, across which the fighting surged back and forth between 1940 and 1942, was the 1,000 kilometres of

desert between Alexandria in Egypt and Benghazi in Libya. It was a campaign of manoeuvre and movement, the objectives being the control of the Mediterranean, the link with the east through the Suez Canal, the Middle East oil supplies and the supply route to Russia through Persia. EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY contains the graves of men who died at all stages of the Western Desert campaigns brought in from a wide area, but especially those who died in the Battle of El Alamein at the end of October 1942 and in the period immediately before that.



Richard leading a recent tour to El Alamein

His father's stories of his war experiences inspired Richard to carry on telling the stories to a wider audience.

Both speakers had an in depth knowledge of their fathers' wars and by sharing them with us and others ensure that they are not forgotten.

Karen Grieve, Branch Event Organiser

The Espionage That Won — and Almost Lost — the War at El Alamein How spies, code breakers and chance decided the course of World War II in the Egyptian desert.

<https://newlinesmag.com/essays/the-espionage-that-won-and-almost-lost-the-war-at-el-alamein/>

Interesting Snippets



RAF jets escorted a flight to Stansted Airport after its pilot lost contact (Picture: RAF file photo).

On 4th March a sonic boom was heard over Leicestershire as RAF fighter jets were scrambled to escort an aircraft which had lost communications.

The sound was also reported across Northamptonshire and by people in Banbury and Oxford.

A Ministry of Defence (MOD) spokesperson said: "Typhoon aircraft from RAF Coningsby offered assistance to a civilian aircraft and were authorised to fly supersonic." The aircraft landed safely.



HMS Protector's red and yellow hull shows up against the ice and snow (Picture: Royal Navy Twitter).

This incredible image of the Royal Navy's only ice patrol ship, HMS Protector, as she sails among the ice floes of the Antarctic has given an insight into the vessel's unique colour scheme and why that is in stark contrast to other ships in the fleet.

While most Royal Navy ships use dark colours and shades of grey to avoid detection, Protector uses a white, red and yellow colour scheme to stand out in the ice and snow.

The vessel sails the waters of Antarctica and the Southern Hemisphere and is deployed for 330 days a year.



Army Farriers keep Household Cavalry horses fit and healthy by honing their skills at the annual shoeing competition between Household Cavalry Regiment and Royal Horse Artillery.



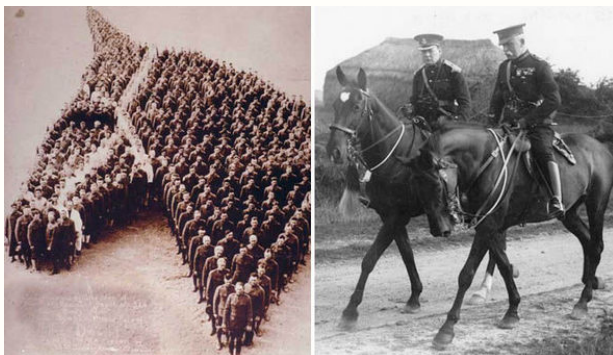
The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans celebrated its 75th anniversary in style at the Royal Air Force Club.

The London-based volunteer organisation works for the benefit of veterans from all conflicts.

It relies on licensed London taxi drivers who volunteer their time and vehicles to provide veterans with regular outings and trips abroad.

The charity was formed by three cab drivers in the Bedford Arms, Fulham in 1948 following a conversation about supporting their friends who had been injured during the First World War. This conversation led to the idea of a charity to support veterans.

The RAF Club was the venue for the first event of its 75th anniversary year, hosting more than 20 Second World War veterans, who arrived in familiar style – in taxis.



The touching shot shows some 650 soldiers standing in a formation which from a bird's eye view perfectly resembles a horse's head, neck, and a noseband.



It is believed the picture was taken by officers of the Auxiliary Remount Dept No.326 in Camp Cody, New Mexico in 1915.

Uncle Wiggly Wings

Berlin Blockade (24 June 1948 – 12 May 1949) was one of the first major international crises of the Cold War.

Berlin had been bombed relentlessly during the Second World War and was in an appallingly parlous state by 1948, yet roughly three million people still lived in this ravaged city and peace had brought a whole new set of problems.

Life for West Berliners was hellish but then it became even worse. By this time Russia was no longer an ally but a cold war adversary. Stalin decided to starve out the Western Allies' zones of Berlin and gain total control of the city. In June 1948, all access to West Berlin through East Germany was closed to road, rail and canal transport leaving the Western Allies with both a political and humanitarian problem.



Deciding against a military confrontation with Russia, an airlift of food and fuel was planned by the US, UK and French who each had a sector of control in West Berlin. It was a good idea but the largest previous airlift undertaken rarely achieved 300 tons per day and now they were looking at 5,000 tons per day. It was an unprecedented and daunting task. West Berlin did have three airfields within the city, Tempelhof in the US sector, Gatow in the British sector and latterly Tegel in the French sector. The various air forces began to assemble every transport plane that they could lay hands on for this gargantuan task. The lion's share of the effort fell on the vast US Air Force which immediately put both military and civilian versions of the twin engine Douglas DC3 Dakota to work but these could only transport 3.5 tons of cargo at a time.



It was into this darkness that Uncle Wiggly Wings brought some light and hope.

His name is Gail Halvorsen, at the time a Lieutenant in the US Airforce. Gail was a pilot on one of the early squadrons of DC3 Dakotas flying into Tempelhof airfield with food for the starving citizens. As he flew over the city with his plane full of cargo, he was horrified to see the devastation and ruins in which the Berliners were living, and saw the children standing on top of piles of rubble, holding onto twisted skeletal steel girders and waving excitedly at the planes, sometimes no more than 500 feet above their heads.

On returning to his US airbase he went straight to the PX store and bought all the chocolate he could find and sat up late that night making small parachutes from hankies and other material. Each miniature parachute carried a Hershey bar and on his next sortie he dropped these from his aircraft and watched them float down towards the cheering children.

Before long the whole squadron was making toy parachutes and American confectionery manufacturers were sending free chocolate and sweets.

Continual harassment by MiG fighters and, even worse, coping with the treacherous Berlin winter weather had cost the lives of 19 British and 31 US aircrew. Uncle Wiggly Wings became a folk hero who continued to visit Berlin, later as a USAF full colonel, to receive the gratitude and affection of the now adult urchins whose spirits were lifted by the love and humanity of this ordinary man with the vision, determination and ingenuity to do extraordinary things



The Russians, previously so certain that the task was impossible, were humiliated and Stalin withdrew the blockade in an embarrassing climb down. The road, rail and canal links were opened once more and West Berliners could get back to the job of rebuilding their lives and not simply surviving. It was a triumph for freedom and democracy, but it came at a price. **Derek Alway**



**ARMY
CADETS**

**PRESS
RELEASE**

Date: 28th February 2023

Ref: Oxon/PRO/NCoy/Henley/
2301

Henley Army Cadet returns from India Exchange

Staff Cadet Colour Serjeant (CSjt) Abbie Addiscott-Allen from Henley Detachment, Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force was selected to take part in an India Exchange project to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence.

The UK's Army Cadet Force selected and sent eight Staff Cadets & supporting Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to India. They underwent a tough selection process including an interview and submitting a personal statement. Before flying to India, Staff Cadet CSjt Addiscott-Allen spent a few days at the National Cadet Training Centre in Frimley Park with the other seven cadets undertaking Team Building activities, military briefings and final kit checks.

The National Cadet Corps Youth Exchange program saw 11 different countries and over 100 cadets meet in India. The cadets participated in community events, military briefings and activities. During the trip, the cadets learnt about each other's socio-economic and cultural realities. After 2 weeks in India, before flying home they had the opportunity to look around Mumbai & the Taj Mahal.

On Staff Cadet CSjt Addiscott-Allen's return to Henley Detachment she briefed the cadets on how her trip went and showed them gifts she had received. It's common tradition on cadet exchanges to take badges and merchandise to swap or gift with other cadets from other countries. Overall, it was a successful trip and has inspired Staff Cadet CSjt Addiscott-Allen to visit more countries and learn more about other cultures.

The Army Cadet Force is a national youth organisation sponsored and supported by the Ministry of Defence for 12 to 18-year olds; Army Cadets provides a challenging and varied syllabus based on military themes. Henley Army Cadet Force parade every Wednesday from 1915 to 2130 at The Drill Hall on Friday Street and are currently looking for new Cadets and Adult Volunteers, feel free to come along and experience something new.

For Henley Detachment enquiries - please email the Detachment Commander,
Lt Mel Fearn on 3360hayne@armymail.mod.uk



Cadet CSjt Abbie Addiscott-Allen outside the Taj Mahal

Army Cadets gives young people - from all walks of life - access to fun, friendship, action and adventure. We challenge young people to learn more, do more and try more. We inspire them to aim high and go further in life, no matter what they aim to do. With 41,000 Cadets and 9,500 adults in more than 1,600 locations around the UK, the Army Cadets makes a big impact on young people, parents and communities. For more information visit armyCadets.com
Oxfordshire Army Cadets has over 20 detachments in every major populated location in the county.

Media enquiries: For further information contact Lt. L Norwood, 07762519420, 5348norwoo@armymail.mod.uk

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RBL Henley & Peppard Branch has been able to secure a group visit on Sunday 13 August to the late Sir William McAlpine's Fawley Hill & Museum. The museum is not open to the general public but is by invitation only.

This private museum and railway is maintained and operated by the Fawley Museum Society Ltd. The railway is around 1¼ miles in length and features the steepest adhesion-worked, standard gauge steam railway in the country with a ruling gradient of 1:13. The Museum opens at 12:00 Noon. To make the most of the day visitors are encouraged to arrive between 11:30 and 13:00. Trains run at regular intervals throughout the day until around 16:30.

You should note that most of the Railway Museum is upstairs.

The cost to members is £16. Car parking is free but it may be possible for us to provide transport at a small cost if sufficient people are interested.

As we need to confirm our numbers as soon as possible could we ask that you let us know by mid-April if you would like to visit the Museum, by reply to this email address - henleyonthames.secretary@rbl.community

Elizabeth Green RIP



Elizabeth Green (née Blesiou) died in hospital in Athens on January 5, aged 62.

After three weeks in intensive care, she finally succumbed to cancer that proved to be inoperable and untreatable.

She lived in Maidensgrove with her husband John, president of the Henley branch of the Royal British Legion. As a member of the Legion herself, she always supported him enthusiastically in his many fund-raising efforts over the years.

Elizabeth, a dentist by profession, had taught at the Athens University of Dentistry.

The couple met in 2001 and were married at Swyncombe in 2005.

Coming from a Greek Orthodox tradition, Elizabeth was amazed and delighted how she was warmly welcomed and able to receive communion at St Botolph's Church.

She loved the tranquillity of Maidensgrove, enjoying the abundance of bird life and the sight of pheasants and even the occasional badger in the garden. Muntjacs were not so welcome!

At one point John had planned to sell their Maidensgrove home as they were spending so much time in Greece.

Elizabeth immediately put a stop to this idea, a decision welcomed by her husband.

Having retired from dentistry, Elizabeth suddenly took up watercolour painting. Completely self-taught, she had a wonderful sense of colour.

She loved cooking but always apologised for only knowing how to cook Greek food, a factor that benefited family, friends and neighbours who were treated to moussaka, cheese pies, pastichio — in fact, the whole range of the world-renowned Mediterranean diet.

Elizabeth enjoyed being a member of Phyllis Court Club in Henley and she was loved by all who knew her. She will be sorely missed.

A memorial service for Elizabeth will be held at 11.30 on Saturday 20th May at St Boltolph's church Swyncombe.

We would like to spread the word and put paid to the notion that only those with a military background or a distant relation who has served in the military can become a member of the Royal British Legion.

It is simply not true!

Membership is open to everyone and by joining our Henley branch your modest annual membership fee of £21 alone contributes all that is required of you in support of the Legion's work and its help for those who have served and their dependants.

Do join us – we are extending a warm invitation to local residents of all ages to try us out by coming to one of our regular luncheon talks which take place on the third Tuesday of each month at the Menza Café in the Henley Rugby Club. You will meet like-minded people who are very welcoming and friendly and who enjoy the companionship of chatting and eating together.



For catering purposes you will need to phone or email Karen Grieve to book a seat at the table, then pay £18 for a 2 course lunch with coffee or tea.

Payment details you will find on page 2 of this Newsletter under **Dates for your Diary**.

We look forward to welcoming you, so please don't hesitate, just pick up the phone and give us a call.

A message to current members too - please feel free to introduce a friend or two by bringing them along to a luncheon talk where they will be assured of a very warm welcome.

Anne Evans - Chairman

Submariners remember 32 deaths of K13 crew at Faslane memorial

On **Sunday, January 26**, Serving Navy Submariners, veterans of the Silent Service and cadets were at Faslane Chaplaincy to commemorate the sinking of submarine K13.



On board were 53 Royal Navy submariners, 14 employees of Govan shipbuilder Fairfield's, five Admiralty officials, a pilot, and the captain and engineer from sister submarine K14.



Trapped below the icy waters of the Gareloch, it was 57 hours before help arrived – with captain of the vessel, Lieutenant Commander Godfrey Herbert, and K14's captain, Commander Francis Goodhart, making a desperate attempt to escape the vessel to get help.

Using the space between the inner and outer hatches as an airlock, the pair escaped but only Herbert made it to the surface alive – Goodhart died after hitting his head during the escape.

An airline was eventually attached to the submarine, bringing her bow to the surface where a hole was cut to allow the survivors to be rescued.

Subsequent Service

K13 was subsequently refurbished and entered service under the name K22

NB To read more about the unbelievable events which followed - copy this address into google

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_K13



Members of Helensburgh Sea Scouts Group, TS Neptune, were given the honour of ringing K13's ship's bell during the ceremony – 32 times, once for every person who perished on board.