



THE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2023



BR0753

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National Service

Remembering National Service - A generation of service and sacrifice

From 1949 - when the National Service Act came into force - and 1963 - when the last National Serviceman was demobbed - more than 2 million men were conscripted to the British Army, Royal Navy or Royal Air Force.

60 years on, Princess Anne paid her respects during a ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire to commemorate those who took part in the National Service from 1949 to 1963

She addressed the crowds and laid a wreath at the Armed Forces Memorial to commemorate the 395 National Servicemen killed on active duty from 1947-1963.



Events Diary

Herewith a reminder that the monthly meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday each month, and to advise and 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 a.m. before moving to the adjoining meeting room for the talk and lunch.

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

Please book with Karen in the first instance by email: kcgrieve@btinternet.com or phone her on **07990 833241**

Then please 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

NB re car parking - If you would like to 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 your car window saying **RBL LUNCH**

Luncheon Talks

- Tuesday 19 Sep** **Robin Dodd - A local national award-winning landscape photographer.**
Some of you will recall his interesting talk in January, "Exposing the Killer Shot", which recounted his father's service in the Special Forces and the UK's spy missions in Berlin during the Cold War years. By popular request he is returning to talk specifically about his photography and this month's talk is entitled "On the Edge of Light"
- Tuesday 17 Oct** **Branch AGM** to start at 10.30 followed by **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** – Menza @ The Henley Rugby Club

NB Special Event: **Sunday 24 September: Aliquando Choir 'Concert with Tea and Cake' at 3pm Sacred Heart Church, Vicarage Road, Henley-on-Thames.**
Tickets £8. Please contact 2anne.evans@sky.com or call 01491 578238

Branch Coronation Events

A special service was held in St Mary's Church, Henley at the invitation of Rev Jeremy Tayler with Standards on parade representing the Scouts, Brownies, Cadets and our RBL Henley & Peppard Branch Standards.



Rev Jeremy Tayler with Standards on parade representing the Scouts, Brownies, Cadets, RBL Henley Standard together with RBL Peppard Standard

Lady Cynthia Hall, Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Canon Paul Fitzpatric of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Minister of Christ Church Henley, Glyn Millington, were in attendance.

The Service, led by the Rev Jeremy Tayler, was a very moving ceremony with the Choir of St Mary's adding gravitas to the proceedings.



Branch Chair, Anne Evans - Branch President and Standard Bearer, John Green, Lady Cynthia Hall, Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire & Canon Paul Fitzpatric of Sacred Heart Catholic Church

For our Branch Celebratory Lunch in honour of Charles III's coronation our speaker was **Joanna Bogle**, author of "A Life Lived for Others", which is the story of **Sue Ryder** and tells the tale of the woman behind the name. It was fascinating and informative in equal measure and very eloquently told.



The lunch was a great success. As it was a special occasion the tables were decorated with flowering orchids and an impressive decorated cake with King Charles' insignia, courtesy of Anne Evans. The Branch Standard was also proudly displayed, thanks to John Green.



Joanna Bogle, author of "A Life Lived for Others"



A welcome visit from Nick Launders, previous Vice Chair of Henley & Peppard Branch



This year saw a welcome return of the May Fayre in the Town Square. Although the RBL Branch did not have a Gazebo we made quite an impressive showing with John Green's garden umbrella with Branch Standard proudly displayed and suitable RBL articles on show. Committee members met some very interesting people which makes it all worthwhile.



News from Branch President - John Green

D-Day Commemoration

On Saturday 3rd June I represented the Branch, as Standard Bearer, at the 79th Anniversary D-Day Commemorative Parade and Service. The service is held at a memorial stone which marks the end of the runway from which aircraft of No38 Group took off on the night of 5th June 1944 - a very moving ceremony!



Henley-on-Thames RBL Standard on parade with Branch President John Green

About 30 Standards were on parade including RAF Cadets, Scouts and Guides. Unbelievably there were 41 separate wreath layers!

Amongst the dignitaries were Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, Lynda Atkins, National Vice-Chair RBL, several Town Mayors and a much be-medalled Kevin Hannaby, RBL Bikers.

I've been in touch with Yusuf Djama (Borama friendship link coordinator) about reviving the annual visit of the Somali community next year. I will liaise with the Town Hall.



Kevin Hannaby, RBL Bikers.

On 28th July I met with Cabdi Jaamac who is writing a book about late Brigadier Malcolm Page and his service with the Somaliland Scouts. I also renewed the RBL 'In Memorium' cross at Robin Appleford's tablet in St Mary's church yard.

John Green – Branch President

Poppy Appeal Report

Armed Forces Day 24th June

The Henley-on-Thames RBL Poppy Appeal held a small event in the Market Square on 24th of June for Armed Forces Day. Local Marine Cadets from 1 Troop / Zulu Company TS Guardian and Royal Air Force Air Cadets from 447 Squadron were also present. RBL Community Fundraiser for Oxfordshire, Yanto Evans's arrival with an RBL gazebo proved very welcome, as apart from its usual function it provided a good shelter from the midday sun.



The Town Mayor, Councillor Sarah Miller with Josh Thatcher, Yanto Evans, and Richard Pinches



Marine Cadets from 1 Troop / Zulu Company TS Guardian and Royal Air Force Air Cadets from 447 Squadron



On display were two 2nd World War Jeeps configured as Long-Range Desert Group Jeeps owned by Josh Thatcher and Richard Pinches, and these created a lot of interest. Josh and Richard gave impromptu talks on the LRDG weapons and the LRDG's valuable contribution to the north African Campaign.



The event was ably assisted by RBL regulars, **David Eggleton, Angelina Jones** pictured here, and Connie Butt, as well as Henley Mason's Cliff Hunter and Geoff Walsh.

Poppy Appeal Organiser Annie Arscott was there for some of the day, but as it was her birthday she was let off duty for a few hours for a birthday lunch. The Town Mayor, Sarah Miller, visited mid-morning to show her support, which was most welcome. Altogether it was a successful event and raised **£403 pounds for the Poppy Appeal**.

The Traditional Boat Rally

The Traditional Boat Rally was held on Fawley Meadows from 14th to 16th July. Now in its 41st year, this is principally a gathering of antique boats on a riverside venue by the Regatta course that also has trade stands, food stalls, antique cars and military vehicles on display. Unfortunately, this year the weather was atrocious with persistent rain all day long on Friday. Saturday was better but it did feature heavy rain showers sporadically and very strong winds, while Sunday was slightly better but still very windy. The British Legion gazebo was manned on the Friday by a very wet Richard Pinches but sadly saw little footfall.

Henley & Peppard RBL Branch President, John Green, took over on Saturday in his WW1 uniform and David Eggleton on Sunday in his WW2 RAF uniform. He also added to the RBL display items with his collection of war memorabilia and trench art. Cliff Hunter of the Henley Masons gave a lot of his time over both main days. Thank you, Cliff!



The Berks and Oxon Military Vehicle Group arrived with a collection of vehicles as well as Josh Thatcher and Richard Pinches' LRDG Jeeps. These all added to the desert themed display, where again Josh and Richard gave impromptu talks, this time aided by Richard's son Ben giving a remarkable impression of Paddy Mayne of SAS fame.



Richard met Rupert Fisher pictured on the left, who came to chat about his relation, General Wavell. He was the first allied General to have a successful offensive operation with Operation Compass in North Africa in 1941.

Sadly all planned flyovers were cancelled due to inclement weather; however, this didn't stop the regular boating displays including the Dunkirk little ships and the amphibious cars.

A nine ton Alvis Stalwart swimming military lorry was giving occasional river trips but the Fawley Meadow slipway was too small so these were facilitated from the New Street slipway.

The event was less well attended this year partly due to the weather and Wimbledon finals. However, a very respectable **£243 was raised for the RBL Poppy Appeal** *Richard Pinches – Poppy Appeal Organiser*

What did you do in the war, Dad?



Sgt Gunner Edward John Robert Hilton DCM

My Dad was born on 12th February 1895 and died in 1967. In 1911 he answered Lord Kitchener's request, lied about his age and joined the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was 16 years old and was one of the first 'over there' as part of the 'contemptible little army' as the Kaiser called them. Over here they were known as 'The Chums'.



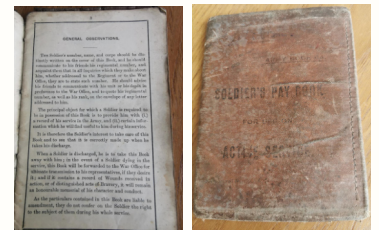
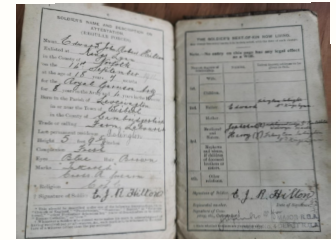
Sgt Gunner Edward John Robert Hilton DCM fought 'over there' between 1914 – 1918 with the 26th Heavy Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery.

- 1914 - Mons, Marne, Aisne, Ypres
- 1915 - Neuve Chapelle, Loos
- 1916 - Somme, Ancre
- 1917 - Bapaume, Lagincourt, Bullecourt, Ypres, Passchendaele
- 1918 - Mont Kemmel, Aisne and Marne, Somme, Arras, Ypres

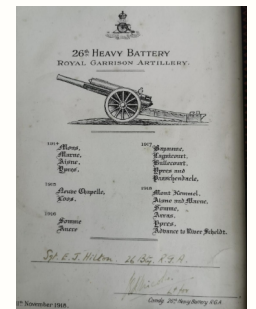
It was the battle at the River Scheldt for which he was awarded DCM

D.C.M. To
36026 Sergt E.J.R.Hilton, 26th Hy. By.,

R G A (near King's Lynn). For marked gallantry and devotion to duty during the advance from Ypres to the Scheldt, in October 1918, especially on the 14 October, 1918 near Terhand when he kept his gun in action under heavy shell fire, although the battery had suffered severe casualties.



Awarded D.C.M. to
36026 Sergt E. J. R. HILTON, 26th Hy. By.,
R.G.A. (near King's Lynn). For marked gallantry and devotion to duty during the advance from Ypres to the Scheldt, in October, 1918, especially on the 14th October, 1918, near Terhand, when he kept his gun in action under heavy shell fire, although the two adjacent guns had both been knocked out, and the battery had suffered severe casualties.



Official Citation

D.C.M .

Service Medals

Documents a WW 1 soldier might carry on him, such as his pay book, the soldiers book of general information and service

Demobbed, slightly wounded, he often said he could feel the bit of shrapnel under the skin on his arm. He also suffered breathing problems due to gas attacks. I remember, on the very rare occasions on which he spoke about his service, he said that as Sergeant in charge he made all his crew lie down in the mud after firing the gun. The other guns in the Battery were put out of action because their crews were killed by machine gun fire, leaving his the only gun still in use.

After demob he joined the Birmingham Police Force as P.C. 9429 on 3rd February 1920. During this time he often noticed a young lass walking to work at Birmingham & Midland Ear & Throat Hospital. Her name was Hilda Martha Hughes, born 19th June 1896, who enrolled as a Nurse in August 1920 and they were married on 31st October 1923.

During his time as a police officer he and a fellow officer PC Finnegan were often on street patrol together, and frequently saw a tram off its tracks. His partner always used to put in a lengthy report - "Whilst proceeding down such and such a street on the --/--/-- at 0900 hours" and so on. On receiving another of these lengthy reports his senior officer called him in and said, "Please keep them brief".

His next report read "Off again, on again, away again. Finnegan"

Branch Member – Don Hilton

The Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS)



Dick Charlton, who turned 103 this June, was invited as guest of honour for the annual Veterans Cruise at the Penton Hook Yacht Club on Saturday 2 September 2023.

As John Green reports, at 10.00 hrs James Nelson (Dunkirk Veterans Standard Bearer) and I collected Dick from the Chiltern Court Care Home where he is a resident.

After an hours drive to the Yacht Club, Dick was welcomed with applause by a contingent of cadets from HMS Collingwood as well as the Lord Mayor and many be-medalled dignitaries.



Ian Gilbert (Hon Vice Admiral ADLS) the skipper of Lady Lou chatted with Dick and explained the background and role played by Lady Lou during the evacuation. Transferring Dick from his wheelchair to the deck of the ship proved problematical but we managed without tipping him into the river, much to the relief of everyone present!



There were 22 'Little ships' on parade. James Nelson stood at the bow with the Dunkirk Veterans Standard.

Being a sunny day, the banks were thronged with visitors all waving and cheering as they passed. Dick acknowledged them enthusiastically by waving back in a truly royal manner.



We returned to the Yacht Club again to a tumultuous reception. Time came to return to base, and restore Dick safely back to his room. He was full of thanks to all concerned for making this trip possible, a trip he thoroughly enjoyed. I visited him next day to find that he took to his bed at 17.30 and slept through till 06.00 next day!

As John says, although Dick's military story has been reported many times, (you can hear his full story captured on film by Richard Pinches on YouTube here: <https://youtube/cJnhb40Nkcw>) it is worth remembering that at the age of 103 he must be one of the last surviving servicemen to have been to Dunkirk. His role was to take wounded soldiers to Beach for evacuation. Having done this, he returned to his unit of the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry for rearguard action at Cassel where he was captured and spent the next 5 years as a POW. But that's another story.....

RBL Oxfordshire County Standard Dedication



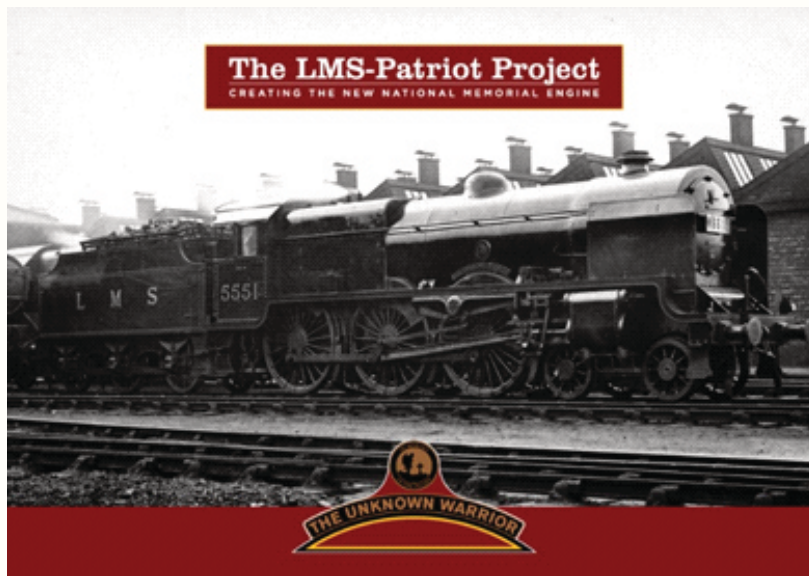
As Branch standard Bearer I represented our Branch at the ceremony at Dorchester Abbey on Sunday 3 September 2023.

The Bishop of Dorchester, the Rt Revd Gavin Collins presided over the short but moving service and the Abbey Choir was in good voice. The four other Standards on parade dipped in unison during the Last Post and the playing of the National Anthem.

After posing for photographs at the Lynch Date we rapidly repaired to the Red Lion for 'refreshments'.

John Green - Branch President





The LMS-Patriot Project - Our aims and progress to date

The LMS-Patriot Project team are building a working steam locomotive as a National Memorial Engine, recreating a railway heritage and Remembrance link established after the Great War and lost in the 1960s.

None of this type of express passenger locomotive – the London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) ‘Patriot’ class - survived when steam traction ended in the 1960s on British Railways. When complete, it will join a select family of other LMS express passenger locomotives that still operate on our UK railway.

Inspired by the Great War Centenaries of recent years - Armistice Day and the repatriation of the Unknown Warrior to Westminster Abbey - the locomotive will be named *The Unknown Warrior*. This recognizes its special Remembrance role as a National Memorial Engine, in memory of servicemen and women lost in the First World War and all subsequent wars. This special role was performed by the first of the original ‘Patriot’ class - named *Patriot* - in honour of railway employees who fell in the 1914-1918 War.

We believe that this commemorative role, together with the importance of the locomotive type itself in the development of our railways, brings a special historical dimension to our work. Our Patron is Simon Weston CBE the well-known Falklands War Veteran.

Our present forecast sees the locomotive completed by 2029, depending on our donations trend. Thereafter we intend that the locomotive will be visible as a working memorial on regular display and hauling heritage trains on tours and at special events for many years to come.

Practically all of the work is new construction, using traditional engineering and manufacturing skills and based on original drawings. All of the major manufacturing and assembly work is being done in the UK. Our main assembly base is the Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust (PRCLT) works at West Shed, Swanwick, Derbyshire, home of the celebrated “Stanier Pacific” *Duchess of Sutherland* (the only express engine of its type still operating today). The boiler is being constructed at Huyton, Liverpool by Heritage Boiler Steam Services; and the tender by the Devon-based Leaky Finders Limited.

Funds are mostly being raised through private donations. To date we have raised and spent £3 million towards an estimated cost of around £4.4 million to finish the job.



The **LMS-Patriot Company Ltd**
Registered Office: The Hub, 17 Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ
Company Registered in England and Wales No. 6502248
Registered Charity No. 1123521 VAT Reg No. 978 8801 48

