



# THE NEWSLETTER

## AUTUMN 2021



BR0753

### Breaking Good News!

We are so very pleased to let everyone know that we are once again able to resume our monthly meetings at the Christ Church Centre in Henley starting on September 20 with a Coffee Morning and Talk at 10.30am. You can find out more on the **Dates for your Diary** page inside.

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### 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day



Sunday 15th August was the 76th anniversary of VJ day but hardly any mention of this on national and local media. First it was 'the forgotten army' in the Far East, now it seems as if this momentous day is largely forgotten! There are exceptions.

A friend of mine remembers two of her uncles who were imprisoned in the infamous Changi jail. They survived but never really recovered from their ordeal.

However the Parachute Regiment Association hold an annual event at Bladon near Blenheim palace (where Churchill was born) to commemorate not only VJ day but celebrate the fact that it was Churchill who ordered the creation of the Parachute Regiment.

This year the PRA invited the RBL to take part. I carried the branch standard together with four more RBL standard bearers and two from the Parachute Regiment.

A moving service was held in the parish church of Saint Martin of Tours in Bladon which included UNMASKED hymn singing, the lighting of a 'peace candle' and a reading by Marina Churchill.

Afterwards we processed to Churchill's grave. An act of remembrance was held and wreaths laid. Buglers sounded the Last Post and Reveille, and Standards dipped. Then the unmistakable roar of Merlin engines as a Spitfire and Hurricane flew over the church, not once but three times! So low we could easily see the pilots.

I hope in the future we will be invited back to take part in this significant national event. As a branch I know we will continue to make an effort to mark VE day and VJ day as appropriate and not let the memory fade.



Ex Warrant Officer James Dixon who served for 23 years with the Paras. & John Green, RBL Henley & Peppard Branch Chairman

## Editorial

Dear Members and Friends

At last after a long layoff due to the pandemic we are able to commence our monthly meetings at Christ Church Centre in Henley, albeit in a slightly different format due to Doug's retirement.

We therefore propose to have a monthly Coffee Morning with a Talk on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month starting in September on the 20<sup>th</sup> at 10.30 for Coffee and a Talk at 11.

We aim to provide you with good coffee, delicious cake and biscuits and talk, all for the princely sum of £10. **To make sure you don't miss out please let us know by the preceding Thursday by email to me at [chairman@rbl-henley.org](mailto:chairman@rbl-henley.org) or phone 01491 578238.**

**On a different subject**, we find ourselves in the position of needing to find a Treasurer to take over from Martin as sadly for us he is retiring. In fact, he 'retired' 2 years ago and has kindly stayed on to see this rookie through her first year as Chairman and now it's time to find his replacement.

I can't thank him enough for the great job he has done over the last 7 years, the meticulous care he has taken in looking after our accounts and for keeping the Committee fully informed and on the right track. Therefore I really cannot presume upon his kindness any longer, so I am putting out a plea for help to you all.

If you would like to be involved or know of someone who would like to join the committee in this role, please let me know as soon as possible. Martin is only too happy to answer any questions you may have so please don't hesitate to send him an email [treasurer@rbl-henley.org](mailto:treasurer@rbl-henley.org) and set up a date to meet and discuss the role further. A full description of the role of Branch Treasurer is on our website under the tab **Job - Treasurer**.

Having not much more to say, I will sign off and look forward to seeing you all again in September.

*Anne Evans, Branch Chairman*

### Dates for your Diary

**September 20<sup>th</sup>** Coffee, Cake and Biscuits 10.30 - 11am Talk at Christ Church Centre  
*Talk by Councillor Sarah Miller, Mayor of Henley*

**October 18<sup>th</sup>** Coffee, Cake and Biscuits - 10.30 - 11am Talk given at Christ Church Centre

*Talk by John Hudson - 'The London Fine Art Salesrooms - a personal view of the past 60 years'*

**November 14<sup>th</sup>** Remembrance Sunday Lunch - venue to be advised

**December 20<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Lunch - **Henley Rugby Club - 12 noon for 12.30**

Our Event Organiser Karen Grieve recently joined the Henley & Peppard Branch and has kindly taken on the role of Event Coordinator.

Karen is also presently arranging the Coffee Morning Talks for 2022, details of which will be in our Winter Newsletter so be sure to fill your new 2022 diary with RBL branch dates for the new year.

### Introducing Karen Grieve - Event Coordinator



I am a recently retired Political Secretary, although I started my career working in communications firstly for the British Army and then NATO in Germany.

My father served in the Army for 50 years – from boy soldier through 22 years in the regular service and finally as NRPS with the TA at Brock Barracks. So I grew up like every other Army child, living a peripatetic life moving from place to place and school to school. The question “where do you come from” leaves me perplexed even today!

I now live in the centre of Henley and am a volunteer room guide at Stonor Park as well as Secretary of the Henley Society. I very much look forward to becoming involved with the work of the Henley Branch of the RBL and getting to know its members.

## Introducing Ania Kozniowska - Committee Member

I was honoured to be asked by our Chairman, Anne, if I would join the committee of your RBL branch. I have been a member of the Henley branch for only a few years, but was first introduced to the Poppy Appeal in my teens in the 1960's, when I joined my mother for a visit to the Star & Garter Home on Richmond Hill, a sanctuary and permanent home for wounded servicemen, many of them veterans of WWI. These brave, humorous men told me about their work making poppies in the factory close-by and their camaraderie left a lasting impression on me. I have since helped raise money for the Poppy Appeal by joining John Green and Stan Ainsley, with Judith Phelan, another local member, on the Nijmegen 4-Day March over two years in Holland and accompanying special-needs students from THC as they took collecting boxes around Henley.

I was born in the Highlands of Scotland of a Yorkshire mother and Austrian father, who had to flee Austria when the Nazis annexed his country. I, thus, have great sentiment to the theme of the Sound of Music. My father had completed his military service, but being of partly Jewish heritage, had his right to carry arms and to continue with his university studies withdrawn and escaped to the UK, where he fortunately had an uncle to vouch for him. He was, however, interned, but ironically later called upon by the War Office to interpret aerial photographs of Austria.

My parents married in 1944. My mother immediately lost her British citizenship and had to legally sign allegiance to King and Country on her wedding day.



I married a Polish veteran of the Warsaw Uprising who had lied about his age and was fighting from the age of 14. He came to this country with the Polish army as yet another refugee. His father spent 5 years in Dachau concentration camp and then had to adjust to life in exile in the UK until his death in 1978.

In the 1960's I spent a year at school in California, travelling right across the US, where I first witnessed racial and social tensions, realising that I was privileged to have led a relatively charmed, trouble-free life, with my father making a success of his academic life in this country.

When my life settled down a little after study and marriage, I realised I wanted to give something back to society and joined the FANY(PRVC) – First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (Princess Royal Volunteer Corps) - and have been a member for almost 30 years. We support military units in their training exercises, e.g. acting as civilian agitators and rioters, and also benefit from military training in shooting, driving, parachuting and survival skills, amongst many.

From driving ambulances in France during WWI, being members of SOE (Special Operations Executive) and in communications during WWII, the FANY remit is now Emergency Response to Civilian and Military Authorities: call-out to terrorist attacks and major incidents, and most recently, assisting at the Nightingale Hospital and coroner's office in London during the Covid-19 pandemic. For a time, I was the Adventurous Training Officer and organised the training and a 3-day crossing on foot of the Pyrenees from France to Spain at our Centenary in 2007 along an escape route used by one of our wartime members, Anne-Marie Walters, a courier for the Wheelwright circuit of SOE, carrying urgent dispatches for London. Ref. 'Moondrop to Gascony' 1946.

I look forward supporting the Branch anyway I can.



**ARMY  
CADETS** >>>

**PRESS  
RELEASE**

## Henley Army Cadets Achieve Promotions

Henley Detachment's very own Tallulah Scott and Jamie Forehand have both recently been promoted to the two most senior ranks achievable within the Army Cadet Force (ACF). This is a huge achievement within the ACF and for their own personal development.

Tallulah Scott has recently promoted to the rank of Cadet Regimental Serjeant Major (RSM) after a series of interviews by the County Commandant. After 5 years in the ACF, RSM Scott is now the highest achieving cadet within the county and holds the Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet Appointment. She now has the added responsibilities leading regimental parades, developing senior cadets and having an input into the cadets training and development.

There is more success to follow at Henley; Jamie Forehand has been promoted to Cadet Company Serjeant Major (CSM), this is the highest rank within Nivelles Company (South Oxfordshire). CSM Forehand, who has been in the ACF for four and a half years, was interviewed by the Company Officer Commanding. Jamie has proven repeatedly that he is suitable for this role by leading parading, developing cadet's leadership skills and taken on projects such as the research on the Battle of Cassel, which has close links to the Henley Detachment.



**Serjeant Charlie James**

\*Finally, a huge thank you to newly promoted Serjeant Charlie James, has taken on the role of substitute Standard Bearer for the Henley & Peppard Branch for the Royal British Legion.

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 1900 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 enquires - please email the Detachment Commander, 2Lt Mel Haynes on [3360hayne@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:3360hayne@armymail.mod.uk)



## **Meet Blitzzy, the 82 year old teddy bear**

Well-worn and obviously once well-loved, the threadbare bear now has a new home after being sold at auction for £1,000

Blitzzy was originally bought for young Mary Gaskell around the time of the outbreak of the war, and the furry toy comforted her during the heavy bombing of Manchester in the late autumn of 1940.

Stored away for decades, Blitzzy was rediscovered by Mary's son, Jonathan McCue, in his loft. "I opened this envelope, it had my mother's name inside and a tag saying, 'my name is Blitzzy, I was purchased by my mother's father while she was about two-years-old at the time of the Blitz'."

Despite being the ripe old age of 82, Blitzzy is in relatively good condition. Steve Fulford, a toy valuer at Hansons Auctioneers where he was sold, said Blitzzy just needs some TLC, having a loose eye, a missing 'squeaker' and a previous repair on his left paw. He said: "For the age that he is, he's in remarkable condition really. He's survived really, really well. He's an 18inch-tall bear, which is quite big. Of course, in the 1930s, children didn't have many toys, so he was something special. In terms of value, he was probably not far off a week's wages."

# Poppy Appeal

## The Poppy Appeal Organiser's Log

This year's Henley-on-Thames and Peppard Poppy Appeal will be launched on Saturday, 30 October at 1100 in the Market Place. The Royal British Legion's charitable targets mean that it is all hands on deck to offset the funding shortfall last year when we were unable to fundraise with the usual exuberant spirit of our volunteers.

Greetings members and friends, it is an honour to introduce myself as the new Poppy Appeal Organiser for Henley and Peppard. Our community has been a longstanding supporter of the RBL's commitment to upholding the welfare of the Armed Forces community. I wholeheartedly want to build on this generous local engagement and coordinate all your volunteering efforts to fundraise for and promote the values of RBL.

The Poppy Appeal relies on its wonderful volunteers. Whether it is just to give a few hours a year to collect donations, to help manage the campaign or help fundraise with special activities.

Since being appointed a few months ago, my efforts have ranged from working with Branch committee members getting our hands dirty tidying the Henley Poppy storage (see photo) to drawing up a fresh structure to help enhance the effectiveness and accountability of our Poppy Appeal. A cornerstone of this is a functional database of volunteers. So, all volunteers, seasoned and new, will need to accept the RBL's volunteer agreement by filling in a Poppy Appeal registration form.



*Mollie Jeffrey, Ania Kozniewska and Sara Abey  
Photo: Stan Ainsley*



*Lapel pin marking the RBL centenary*

Please see the volunteer agreement on the following page. I would be very grateful if you could become a registered volunteer. You could email me a digital copy of the completed form or arrange to drop off or collect a hard copy. You can also post it to our Membership Secretary, Mollie Jeffrey at Linhay, Harpsden, Henley-on-Thames RG9 4AT

Failing that you will also be able to collect them at the next Branch meeting on 20 September. However, to join the much-needed volunteer force required to organize the 2021 Henley and Peppard PA, I would be most grateful if you could join before this.

If you have the time and would like to give something back to the Armed Forces for the unique difficulties they resolve and the sacrifices they make for us, please become a Henley and Peppard Poppy Appeal volunteer.

As a final note, you may have seen the elegant limited edition lapel pin marking the 2021 centenary of the RBL. These will be available for you at the next Branch meeting together with 2020 pins for collectors who missed them last year. As there are only a few centenary pins offered, please email me to reserve one for you.

Sara Abey  
Henley-on-Thames and Peppard Poppy Appeal Organiser  
[henley@saraabey.com](mailto:henley@saraabey.com)

Please return to PAO Sara Abey

# Poppy Appeal Collector

## Registration form



### ⇒ About you

Full name			
Address (including post code)			
Preferred phone number			
Email address			
What is best the way to get in touch?	Phone	Email	Post
Are you over 18?*	Yes		No

\*Being under 18 won't stop you volunteering, but some of our roles are not suitable for someone under the age of 18. We may also need permission from your parent or guardian if you are under 18.

### ⇒ Do you need support so you can volunteer?

We welcome volunteer applicants with all range of abilities for the skills they bring. We aim to create a positive environment that supports all volunteers. So we can consider any appropriate adjustments to better support in your role, please give details below of any disabilities or health issues that we may need to take into consideration.

### ⇒ Emergency contact details

Please give details of the person we would need to contact, on your behalf, in the unlikely event of an emergency.			
Name:		Phone number:	
Their relationship to you:			

### ⇒ Previous contact with the Legion

Have you been, or are you currently, a volunteer with, a member or member of staff of The Royal British Legion?		
<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Staff</b>

### ⇒ Privacy statement

At The Royal British Legion we take your privacy seriously and we will only use the information you have provided on this form in order to process your application to volunteer with us. We are processing your data based on the legitimate interests of The Royal British Legion, and will use the contact details you have provided to discuss your volunteering application, and, if you are successful in your application, to send you relevant information about volunteering.

We will not share your data and promise to keep your personal information safe and secure. It may be stored electronically on our systems, or manually, and will only be used by those authorised to access it.

We will hold your personal data for up to six months after you apply if you do not become a Legion volunteer, or, if you become a volunteer, for up to 12 months after you stop being a volunteer. If you would like us to stop the processing of your personal information for the purposes of volunteering please speak to your Legion contact, or contact [volunteersupport@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:volunteersupport@britishlegion.org.uk) or call 0345 845 1945.

This will not affect the personal information the Legion may already hold about you and are processing for other purposes in other parts of the organisation, such as membership, Poppy Shop or in connection with donations.

For more information about how The Royal British Legion processes personal information and about your rights under the data protection law please see our Privacy Policy: [www.britishlegion.org.uk/privacy](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/privacy)



# Volunteer Agreement

This agreement sets out our commitment to you and our expectations of you in your role as a volunteer for The Royal British Legion. This agreement is binding in honour only and is not a legal contract. The Legion does not intend any employment relationship to be created as a result of this agreement.

## ⇒ Our commitment to you

- We will provide you with a briefing to ensure you understand your role.
- Your welfare is of paramount importance to us so we will strive to make sure that you remain safe when working as a volunteer for us.
- We will treat you with honesty and fairness and work with you to resolve any problems that arise as a result of volunteering for us.
- You are covered by the charity's personal accident and public liability insurance while carrying out your agreed duties as a Legion volunteer.
- We value and appreciate all volunteers and staff and are committed to making our volunteering opportunities accessible and attractive to all sections of the communities we serve.
- We will treat your personal information confidentially, keeping it secure and using it only for the purposes you have agreed to.

## ⇒ Our expectations of you while you are volunteering for us

- Work according to our policies, procedures and guidelines, and follow any instructions you are given while volunteering.
- Act in accordance with and promote the Legion's values of service, collaboration, passion, excellence and valuing our people, while representing the Legion.
- Respect and sensitively support beneficiaries and others you come into contact with, whatever their personal characteristics or background.
- Act in a professional manner when representing the Legion as a volunteer, in order to protect our reputation.
- Let us know of any changes to your personal circumstances that affect your volunteering for us.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, sharing knowledge and information within the team as appropriate.
- Protect any personal or private information about others that comes to your notice – treating it confidentially at all times, not sharing it with third parties (unless specifically authorised to) and keeping it secure.

## Our shared values

-  Service
-  Collaboration
-  Passion
-  Excellence
-  Valuing our People

Please keep a copy of this agreement.

## From Pleasure Palace to Indian Hospital

I was pleasantly surprised, as the great-grand-daughter of an Indian Army soldier visiting the recently restored Royal Pavilion in Brighton, to learn of its use as a hospital for wounded Indian soldiers during the First World War.



Soldiers from across the Empire came to support the British and fight in Europe. The Indian Army provided the largest number of troops, and by the end of 1914 they made up almost a third of the British Expeditionary Force.

Following intense fighting on the Western Front, the Indian Army suffered casualties and medical facilities were urgently required. Brighton was chosen as the site for a complex of military hospitals.

The Palace, together with the Dome and Corn Exchange, were converted into a state of the art medical facility in less than two weeks. New plumbing and toilet facilities were established, and 600 beds were set up in new wards. X-ray equipment was provided, and the Great Kitchen became one of two operating theatres and the first patients arrived in early December 1914. Twelve thousand Indian soldiers who were wounded on the Western Front were hospitalised at sites around Brighton.

However, the hospital was not only designed to care for the men's medical needs. An enormous amount of effort was taken in catering for the patients' religious and cultural needs. Muslims and Hindus were provided with separate water supplies, and nine kitchens were set up in the grounds so that food could be cooked by the patients' co-religionists and fellow caste members.

Sikhs were provided with a tented Gurdwara in the grounds of the Pavilion, and Muslims were given space on the eastern lawns to pray to Mecca.



Elaborate arrangements were made for those Indian men who died in the Brighton hospitals, 18 of whom died in the Royal Pavilion. Sikhs and Hindus were provided with a site for open air cremations on the Downs near Patcham, and Muslims were buried in a specially laid out cemetery in Woking near the Shah Jahan Mosque.

In late 1915 the British decided to redeploy the Indian Army in the Middle East, and most Indian soldiers were withdrawn from Europe. As a result, Brighton's Indian hospitals gradually closed. The Pavilion was the last to close in January 1916.

The Indian hospital is marked by two monuments in Brighton. The Chattri memorial stands on the spot on the Downs where Hindus and Sikhs were cremated. It is accompanied by a memorial maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission bearing the names of the 53 men who were cremated here. An annual remembrance ceremony takes place here every June, organised by the Chattri Memorial Group.



2021 marks the centenary of the presentation of the Indian Gate at the southern entrance to the Royal Pavilion in Brighton. The Gate was presented to the people of Brighton by the 'princes and people of India' as a gesture of thanks for the care provided by the town's Indian hospitals. It was unveiled by the Maharajah of Patiala on 26 October 1921.

*Karen Grieve*