



THE  
**NEWSLETTER**  
CHRISTMAS 2023



BR0753

*Happy  
Christmas  
Henley*

**Editor**

Anne Evans  
01491 578238  
Henleyonthames.chairman  
@Rbl.community

**Sub-Editor & Distribution**

Mollie Jeffrey  
Mobile: 07768 851615  
MCJ1145@gmail.com

**Contributing Editor**

Colour Serjeant Tallulah Scott

**Membership Secretary**

Mollie Jeffrey  
Mobile: 07768 851615  
MCJ1145@gmail.com

**Event Coordinator**

Karen Grieve  
info@rbl-henley.org

**Branch Treasurer**

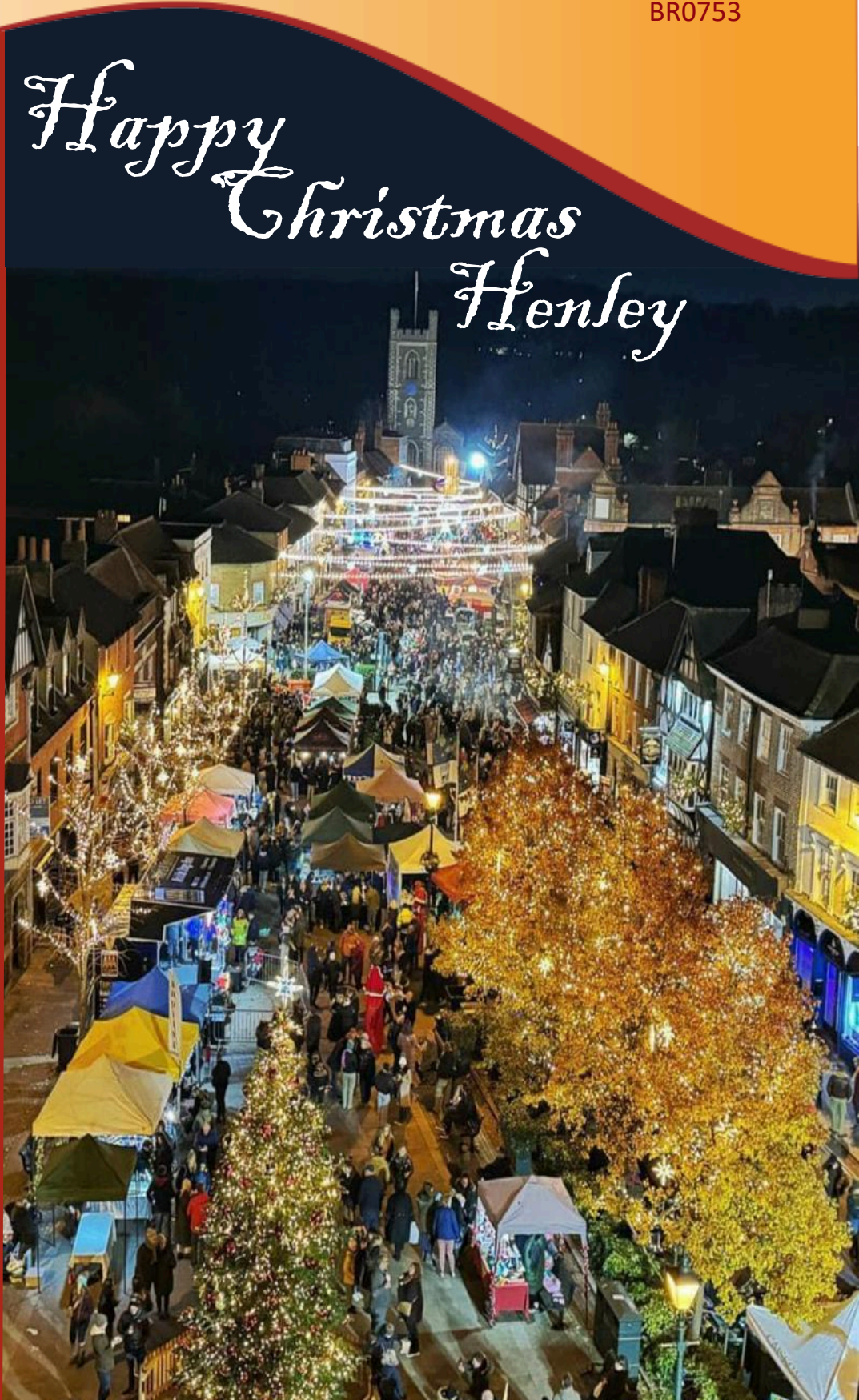
Kathy Bardwell-Springett  
henleyonthames.treasurer  
@rbl.community

**Poppy Appeal Liaison**

Richard Pinches  
Info@richardpinches.co.uk

**Website**

www.rbl-henley.org



## 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, scrumptious 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](mailto: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:**

**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**

**We wish all our members a very Happy Christmas**

**Do join us for our CHRISTMAS LUNCH - Monday 18 Dec '23 - Rugby Club Menza Cafe**

**12.00 for 12.30**

**Please book before 14 December 2023**

## Luncheon Talks 2024

- Tuesday 16 Jan** **Trading Standards** - Linda Thomas will be giving lesser-known insights and anecdotes of experiences encountered during her many years of working to a high level within the Trading Standards environment. It's not as dry as you might imagine! Be prepared to be surprised!
- Tuesday 20 Feb** **Giving aid in Tanzania** - dentistry in the bush - Stuart Cripps, B.DS. Lond LDS, RCS Eng  
Stuart qualified as a dentist at Guy's Hospital in 1969 and following six years in general practice in South Africa he worked for many years in general practice in Beaconsfield. In retirement he has undertaken annual trips to Tanzania to teach emergency dentistry in the bush with the charity Bridge2aid.
- Tuesday 19 Mar** **John Bodman** - Travels in India
- Tuesday 16 Apr** **Richard Pinches** 'Bagnold's Boys in the Desert' The story of the Long Range Desert Group
- Tuesday 21 May** Lunch - speaker tbc
- Tuesday 18 Jun** Lunch - Speaker tbc
- Tuesday 16 Jul** Lunch - speaker tbc

# Poppy Appeal Launch 2023

## The Royal British Legion 2023 Poppy Appeal was launched in Henley Market Place on Saturday 28 October

Tradition was followed this year when John Green, the President of the Henley Branch of the Royal British Legion presented **Mayor Councillor Kellie Hinton**, with a poppy which effectively launched the Poppy Appeal.



**Richard Pinches, Poppy Appeal Organiser** said, "Raising money for the Poppy Appeal is the largest fundraiser for the Royal British Legion. Henley has always supported this charity and the funds raised make a vital difference in supporting the needs of the Armed Forces. Today's event, with the number of people who have attended and supported this event is indicative of this and has made a fabulous start to fundraising. I am very grateful to everyone involved."



John Green also presented poppies to two of the Mayor's Cadets **Corporal Angelika Gwiazda**, and air cadet **Aleks Kluch**.



**Walter Good, a veteran himself said**, "Wearing your poppy shows serving personnel, veterans and their families, that their service and sacrifice are important to you and will never be forgotten."

**Angelina Jones, a volunteer collector** said: "It is very important for me to support the Royal British Legion for those old soldiers and military people who are not with us anymore or able to help, then it is vital that people in my generation take up the baton and help the Royal British Legion."



The crowds enjoyed the sound of **Sam Brown's** greatly entertaining Ukulele Band.



**Deputy Mayor, Councillor Rory Hunt** receiving his poppy from John Green



**Richard Pinches, Poppy Appeal Organiser**, arranged for a large poppy to be painted on Mill Meadows to launch this year's appeal, with his thanks going to Simon Hughes from Origin Amenity Solutions and Danny Perkins Contracts Manager from Groundtel.

*Photoes courtesy of Michaela Clarke, Henley Herald*

## Poppies through the years



I've heard of the story about a poppy appeal volunteer who stood by a wooden cross to catch people passing by on their way to work. Occasionally he would bend down and plant a poppy and a little wooden cross of remembrance in the soil beside it.

People passing by saw what was being done and before long there were queues lining up to buy an extra poppy to plant beside his. I'm not sure where it happened, but if anyone reading this newsletter cares to hazard a guess, please get in touch with me.

I find this a very moving gesture, and it may very well have been the beginning of the trend to create a Field of Remembrance around Remembrance time.

*Anne Evans - Editor*

### The 1<sup>st</sup> Field of Remembrance ?



In 2014 the Tower of London marked the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War with the commemorative art installation 'Blood Swept Lands' and 'Seas of Red', which saw the moat filled with 888,246 ceramic poppies, each one representing a British or Colonial fatality in the First World War.



In 2018 the Tower once again became a site of commemoration, marking 100 years since the end of WW1 with 'Beyond the Deepening Shadow'.

The nightly candle lighting ceremony in the moat was led by the Yeoman Warders and created a circle of light radiating from the Tower as a symbol of remembrance.

Both commemorative events at the Tower were part of the world-wide, First World War centenary commemorations that began on 28 July 2014 and ended on 11 November 2018

I received this letter today and thought it would reach a lot more people if I posted it in this Newsletter.

Dear Chairman,

12 former RWAF officers -National Service- who served in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria in the mid to late 1950's, met for our annual lunch with wives and carers at Phyllis Court on 5th October 2023, this being our 15th lunch.

Perhaps you know some others who served in the Royal West African Frontier Force? If so we would like to hear from them and invite them to our 2024 lunch. Simon and I have known each other since our early teens and were not too surprised to find ourselves in the queue at Brock Barracks joining up with the Royal Berkshire Regiment on 1st November 1956. With best wishes, Richard Butler.

You can contact Richard Butler at [bintumani@gmail.com](mailto:bintumani@gmail.com) or Simon Davis at [simondavis257@gmail.com](mailto:simondavis257@gmail.com).

## This lovely place

Committee members Mollie and Stan photographed here, recently embarked on a relaxing narrowboat holiday and cruised along the Oxford canal from Napton-on-the-Hill.

They have asked to share a moment from their walk one sunny autumn morning when they came across this WW11 observer post high on the hill with beautiful panoramic views and an eye-catching windmill close by. In particular they found these words on the information board have stayed with them:



*"This seat and Rowan tree are on the site of the WWII Observer Post operated by the Royal Observer Corps.*

*It was part of a network of observer towers built for the purpose of providing a system for detecting and tracking aircraft. The Blitz on Coventry (to the north of this spot) in November 1940 would have been observed from the tower. Villagers also witnessed the event from these fields. The tree was planted on the 50th anniversary.*

*The Oxford canal is close by and also played a part in the defences of the area in WWII. Following the fall of France in 1940 a German invasion was considered imminent and part of Britain's defence system was a network of inland Stop Lines. The canal around Napton was part of Western Command's Napton to Coventry Stop Line.*

*Evidence of these defences can still be found along the canal to the south of this spot. There are still Stent pillboxes on the side of the canal and anti-tank blocks just off the canal.*

*The support to this country in its desperate hours by such people as the Observer Corps, The Home Guard, The Women's Land Army and the Agricultural and Horticultural workers who fed and protected this Nation is not always adequately remembered. So please take time to sit and reflect on the freedom we have today."*

And that is exactly what they did.

# Remembrance Service & Parade - Henley 2023





RBL Richard Pinches, standing here with Councillor David Eggleton read the famous 4<sup>th</sup> stanza from "For the Fallen" a poem written by Laurence Binyon. Henley fell silent on Saturday 11 November at 11 o'clock on the steps of the Town Hall to remember the auspicious day the armistice was signed at Compiègne in France at 5.45 A.M in 1918, which came into effect at 11 o'clock in the morning.

The odd recurring insistence of the figure 11 on this day led to the famous saying highlighting the armistice "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month."

Although the treaty resulted in a ceasefire for France on the Western Front, hostilities in other regions, such as in parts of the former Russian Empire, continued for a short time. As a result, the armistice expired after only 36 days and had to be extended several times to remain in effect. With the Treaty of Versailles that was signed in June the following year, in 1919, it was only then that World War I came to an absolute end.



Laurence Binyon, CH (10 August 1869 – 10 March 1943) was an English poet, dramatist and art scholar. Born in Lancaster, England, his parents were Frederick Binyon, a clergyman, and Mary Dockray. He studied at St Paul's School, London and at Trinity College, Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize for poetry in 1891. He worked for the British Museum from 1893 until his retirement in 1933. In 1904 he married the historian Cicely Margaret Powell, with whom he had three daughters, including the artist Nicolette Gray.

Moved by the casualties of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914, Binyon wrote his most famous work "For the Fallen", which is often recited at Remembrance Sunday services in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In 1915, he volunteered as a hospital orderly in France and afterwards worked in England, helping to take care of the wounded of the Battle of Verdun. He wrote about these experiences in 'For Dauntless France', re-released as a centenary edition in 2018 as 'The Call' and the 'Answer' by Dare-Gale Press. After the war, he continued his career at the British Museum, writing numerous books on art.

He was appointed Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University in 1933. Between 1933 and his death in 1943, he published his translation of Dante's Divine Comedy. His war poetry includes a poem about the London Blitz, 'The Burning of the Leaves', regarded by many as his masterpiece.

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted:  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.**

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.



John Green, President of the Henley & Peppard Branch and Branch Cadet's Liaison, attended the Army Cadets' meeting on Friday Street, to assist the training of the Standard Bearers and was pleased to congratulate them on their exemplary handling on Remembrance Sunday.

He went to their subsequent meeting on a Wednesday to present certificates of appreciation to those who carried our Branch Standards on Remembrance Sunday, along with RSM G Iveson, for the manner in which she acted as Parade Leader for the Henley RBL and Ex-Services contingent.



John also took the opportunity then of thanking the Unit for their enthusiastic and well attended efforts in support of the Poppy Appeal.

One of the benefits of being a Poppy Volunteer is the opportunity it gives to chat with an interesting cross section of the general public. For example one lady I spoke to was wearing a hand crocheted poppy. It transpired she was Canadian and told me that her father, grandfather and great grandfather had all fought for the "mother country". All their medals are framed and displayed with pride at her home in Canada.

This collection includes a Khedive Star awarded for the 1882-91 campaign in Egypt and unauthorised by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

*John Green*

