



THE NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2022



BR0753

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The Queen's funeral procession passing the Cenotaph



Thank you your Majesty for giving us so many wonderful memories over the amazing span of 70 years.

Your stalwart presence has created an enduring memory which we shall never forget.

You have also given us reason to smile with deep affection.



Henley-on-Thames musters its Standards for the Memorial Service held in the beautiful St Mary's Church for our late monarch, Queen Elizabeth II

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 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.

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 Car parking is 50p if you are visiting the restaurant.

Events 2022

Monday 19 December '22 – Christmas Lunch - Henley Rugby Club - please don't forget to book

Events 2023

- | | |
|--|---|
| Tuesday 17 January | Robin Dodd, "Exposing the Killer Shot" |
| Tuesday 21 February | Richard Pinches aka 'The Lone Rat', WWII Re-enactor, "To El (Alamein) and Back" |
| Tuesday 21 March | Terry Grouk, An Illustrated Talk on his book "The Hidden History of Wargrave Hall" |
| Tuesday 18 April | Yanto Evans, Community Fund Raiser for Oxfordshire and war veteran of Iraq and The Falklands. |
| Tuesday 16 May
Coronation Lunch | Joanna Bogle, author of "A Life Lived for Others" which is the story of Sue Ryder and tells of the woman behind the name. |
| Tuesday 20 June | Stuart Cripps, Dentist working for Bridge2Aid in Tanzania tbc |
| Tuesday 18 July | tba |
| Sunday 13 August | Visit to Fawley Hill Museum & Railway |
| Tuesday 15 August | speaker tba |
| Tuesday 19 September | speaker tba |
| Tuesday 17 October | speaker tba |
| Sunday 12 November | Remembrance Sunday Lunch - Masonic Lodge tbc |
| Monday 18 December | Christmas Lunch  |

Henley Poppy Appeal 2022

Market Place was abuzz with activity on Saturday 29 October with the return of Henley Poppy Day. The event, organised by the Poppy Appeal, is a staple of the Henley calendar in the run up to Remembrance Day.



Hundreds of people visited the Poppy Appeal's stand to purchase their poppy ready for the Remembrance period.

Yanto Evans, Community Fundraiser for Oxfordshire's Poppy Appeal, said, "The wearing of the poppy shows members of the Armed Forces and veterans that the public appreciates their sacrifice, and also the sacrifice a lot of their families make. There are children who don't see their mum or dad for months on end, so there's sacrifice from families as well.

Remembrance and hope is what the poppy resembles. You're wearing it to remember the sacrifice people have given, and also it's to hope for peace."



The stall was run by servicemen and women from RAF Benson, who volunteered their time for the event.



This year, Waterloo Band & Bugles of The Rifles were on hand to entertain with live music. The Poppy Appeal is the largest fundraiser for the Royal British Legion. The funds raised by the campaign go towards upholding the welfare of the members of the British Armed Forces, veterans and their families.

Photos and Script courtesy of the Henley Herald

Sara Abey, Organiser of the Henley Poppy Appeal, said about Saturday's Poppy Day, "Thank you, Henley. It was a fantastic day of fundraising, we were blessed with wonderful weather and several hundred people came to our poppy stall."



I am immensely thankful to our amazing team of Poppy volunteers and RAF Officers for helping me organise and collect donations around the town.

And I am very grateful to Hof's Bar and Blandy & Blandy Solicitors for sponsoring the talented Waterloo Band & Bugles of The Rifles. The Bandleader, Serjeant Gary Hamilton, from Henley, and his fellow musicians made our Poppy Day very special.



"Remembrance Poppy Appeal is the Royal British Legion's largest fundraiser that supports the welfare needs of our Armed Forces community. Our Henley community has always been a generous contributor, and on Henley Poppy Day it was wonderful to see this ongoing enthusiasm."

Without volunteers, there would be no Poppy Appeal. If you have the time and would like to give something back to the Armed Forces, please contact Sara Abey at henley@saraabey.com



Ania Kozniewska with Judith Phelan who never stopped collecting. She rattled her box up St Mary's Church bell tower steps and captured more donations from the band of ringers!



Script and photos courtesy of the Henley Herald & Dan Evans

Remembrance Sunday Service - 13 November 2022



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.



When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today.



Remembrance Sunday Service - Mayor's Address

The service was led by St Mary's Church rector, Father Jeremy Tayler and after the opening address, Anne Evans, Chairman of the Royal British Legion, Henley & Peppard Branch said Robert Laurence Binyon's poem, 'For the Fallen', before the Last Post was sounded at 11 o'clock and a two-minute silence was observed. The Reveille played, and Anne concluded the silence by reading John Maxwell Edmonds' Kohima Epitaph.



The Mayor, Councillor Michelle Thomas then addressed the gathering and thanked Dick and Mark Haynes from Royal Air Force Detachment Muharraq for being so generous with their time to help with her speech. They fought in the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. She said, "It is obvious that every time you tell your personal stories and share them with us, you are reliving and remembering all you went through. I will never forget it."

When recalling the loss of veterans of WW2, Michelle remembered Queen Elizabeth II, our late Queen.

"The Queen's contribution to the war effort during World War II is well documented. At the age of 19, Princess Elizabeth, along with thousands of women joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). She trained as a driver and mechanic with the rank of Second Subaltern. Five months later she was promoted to Junior Commander, which was the equivalent of Captain."

In conclusion The Mayor spoke of the war in Ukraine, "We often hear the term to describe war as futile. The utter futility of war is one of my abiding observations of the testimony of Dick and Mark – the constant moving of the lines – moving forward, retreating, digging in, advancing again, and now, we witness the same is being repeated as we receive continual news of the retaking of territory such as the happy liberation of Kherson just yesterday." She thanked residents and schools who have opened their doors to Ukraine refugees and those who continue to work to secure their everyday needs.



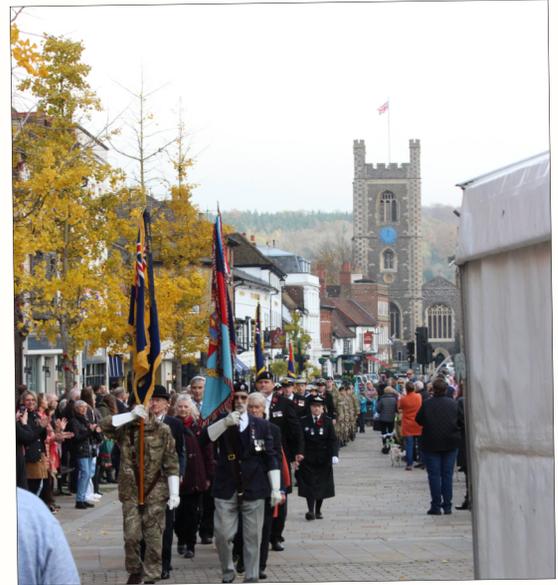
Wreaths were then laid on the Town Hall steps by Deputy Lieutenant Cynthia Hall, John Howell MP, the Mayor, County and District Councillors, the Royal British Legion and 20+ community groups, schools, service organisations and businesses.

This was followed by a March Past of the organisations on parade with their standards which included the Sea and Army Cadets, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides. They marched down and around Market Place and back up to the Town Hall to the applause of the gathering.



Script courtesy of the Henley Herald - Photos Dan Evans & the Henley Herald

Remembrance Sunday Service 2022 Snap-shot



The Branch Remembrance Sunday Lunch

This year we held our Remembrance Lunch at the Masonic Centre in Henley.

The Thames Freemason Lodge sponsored a delicious roast lunch, pear crumble and cheese boards together with a nice glass of wine. The tables were beautifully decorated, and the Chef and her team ensured that everyone left fully replete! It was a convivial occasion attended by over 40 RBL members as well as members of the Masonic Lodge who wished to share in marking this special occasion.



In observing Remembrance, we were also able to come together and share the spirit of community. We are extremely grateful to the Thames Lodge for their generous support and a special thank you to Geoff Walsh, whose unstinting assistance and co-operation ensured that the day was a huge success.



Events Organiser - Karen Grieve

A huge thank-you to our Events Organiser Karen Grieve, whose hard work and assistance from Ania Kozniewska and Kathy Bardwell-Springett brought the occasion together so very successfully.



Michaela Clarke & David Eggleton



Anne Duffy & Pam Johnson



Mike & Judith Phelan



Chair - Anne Evans & Chris Thomson



Brian & Sue Triptree with Ania Kozniewska & Karen Grieve

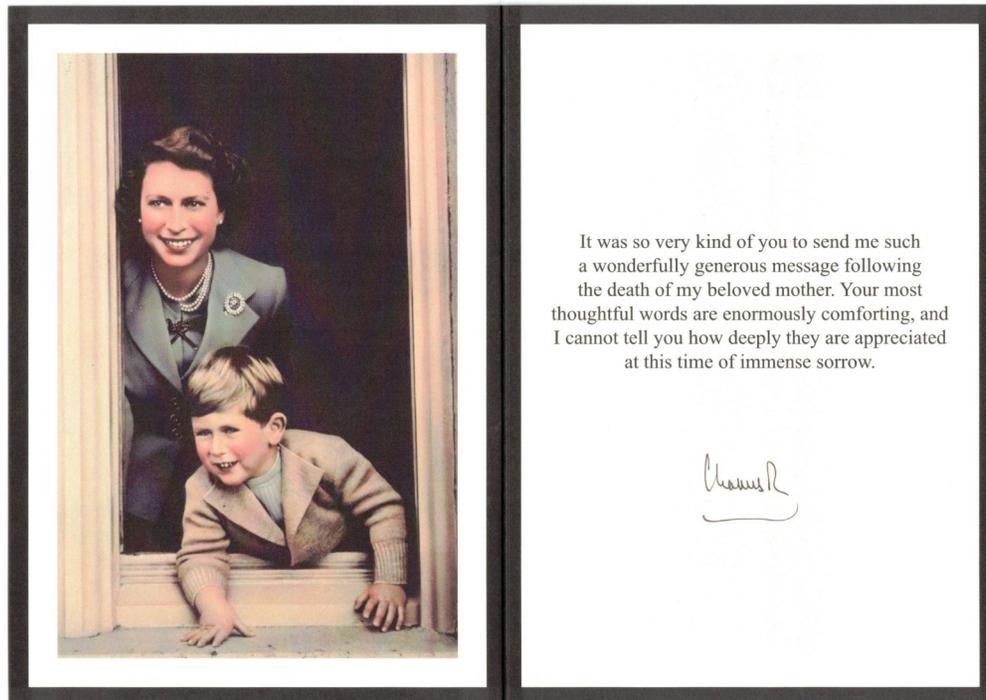


Committee Members Stan Ainsley & Mollie Jeffrey with Geoff Lockett & Judy Clinton



Geoff Walsh with Tony & Barbara Anderson

**Card from King Charles III Buckingham Palace
Acknowledging Henley & Peppard Branch's
Letter of Condolence**



The Henley & Peppard Branch was honoured to have our President John Green invited to parade the branch Standard at this year's Festival of Remembrance held in the Albert Hall. Particularly poignant as we also remembered our late Queen Elizabeth II.

(John Green second from left)



Royal British Legion are custodians of Remembrance

A daughter's account of her father's WW2 Memories

Helen Lansdown says that her father “is not one to talk much about his days fighting in the war, but more recently I have been able to coax a little more from him. Maybe due to the passing (and healing) of time.”

Eric enlisted with the RAF in September 1943 at Lords Cricket Ground, London. He completed his flying training as a pilot in Canada, graduating to the twin-engine Airspeed Oxford. On receiving his pilot's ‘wings’, he learned that he was posted to fly the four-engine Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber. No 5 Operational Training Unit at Abbotsford, British Columbia, was one of the units that initiated pilots to tricycle landing gear, with which the B-24 was equipped, with 25 hours of flying on twin-engine North American B-25 Mitchells, before graduating to the mighty Liberators.

Eric travelled back to the UK by sea and, learning that he was posted to join 355 Squadron in India, he then sailed onwards via the Bay of Biscay, the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal, via Aden and on to India. When he arrived at Salbani airfield in West Bengal, India, where 355 Squadron was based, he got his first glimpse of the Liberator bombers lined up and Helen says that “he recalls being reminded of elephants by the curved shape of these large grey aircraft”.



A B-24 Liberator at Salbani, India, before the standard RAF roundels were replaced with the SEAC pale-blue and dark-blue roundels

355 Squadron was formed at Salbani in the autumn of 1943 and carried out its first bombing operation in November that year.

In addition to its RAF personnel, a significant number of Australian and New Zealand aircrew flew with the squadron. The Squadron mounted numerous bombing raids against the Burma-Siam railway and rail marshalling yards, as well as other important targets such as bridges, airfields, port facilities, supply dumps and gun positions. Bombing raids were flown both by day and by night.

From January 1944 the four-engine Consolidated B-24 Liberators became the principal RAF strategic bombers in the Far East, with their long range enabling attacks against Japanese targets across the region. The bombing campaign targeted the transport network in Burma and Indochina, including enemy shipping.

The RAF Liberators were generally flown by a crew of eight to ten men, with two pilots – captain and co-pilot – for these long missions. 355 Squadron was one of five strategic bomber squadrons in the Far East; in addition, 358 Squadron operated the Liberator in the Special Duties role.



Eric Lansdown as a Sergeant Pilot after the award of his pilot's ‘wings’.

Eric Lansdown – SEAC Liberator pilot

Eric spent two years overseas and flew 300 operational hours as a co-pilot in the 355 Squadron Liberators. Many of the bombing operations were very long-duration sorties, with one of his longest being a 12-hour sortie to bomb a convoy off King Isle, Burma, covering a distance of almost 2,000 miles.

On one sortie in November 1944 the crew flew without a flight engineer to save weight and Eric had to deal with a runaway propeller without the help of the engineer. The mission had to be aborted. During the time that Eric flew with 355 Squadron, the RAF lost around 60 Liberators on operations in the Far East, 10 of them from Eric's own squadron. The appalling weather at certain times of the year was as much of a problem as enemy fighters and anti-aircraft fire, and some Liberators were lost due to running out of fuel on the long missions.

VJ Day came and went with victory in the Far East, but it was not until March 1946 that Eric returned home to the UK. He said he was "perishing cold" when he arrived because he was still dressed in tropical clothing.

Eric had a surprise visitor for his 100th birthday on 20 September 2022 in the form of Squadron Leader Chris Fairley who delivered a hand-written birthday card from the RAF. Chris flies C-130 Hercules at RAF Brize Norton and is also a Dakota captain and Lancaster co-pilot with the BBMF. Eric was able to show him his original Pilot's Flying Logbook. Helen says, "It was a lovely time shared between two pilots, old and young."



Left: Eric Lansdown with his RAF pilot themed 100th birthday cake.

Right: Eric with Sqn Ldr Chris Fairley BBMF 'Bomber' pilot, who delivered a 100th birthday card.

'Grateful thanks to Helen Lansdown for allowing us to reproduce this article, originally published in the RAF Memorial Flight Club Newsletter'



**ARMY
CADETS** >>>

**PRESS
RELEASE**

Henley Army Cadets

Recently, the Henley Army Cadets joined the rest of Southern Oxfordshire at a training weekend in Bicester to kickstart their training for the next academic year. After the September intake, this was the first training weekend for many cadets, and for others it was an opportunity for them to continue their training.

The Basic cadets aged (12-13) undertook first aid and communication systems training and had the opportunity to use the Scorpion air rifle. All of this training started setting the foundation for the rest of their time in cadets.

The one star cadets (aged 13-14) undertook navigation and weapons training. These cadets had been on previous training weekend and annual camp earlier in the year. This was an opportunity for them to work towards their next star pass.

The two star cadets (aged 15-16) had the opportunity to attend either a St Johns Ambulance youth first aid course or a Junior Cadet Instructors Course (JCIC). All Cadets get the opportunity to undergo first aid training, and the St Johns Ambulance youth first aid course focuses on dealing with an emergency, electric shocks, severe allergic reactions, spinal injuries and much more. The JCIC course focuses on giving more senior cadets the opportunity to use the training they have received to help the more junior cadets learn and develop as they have. The course introduced them to the Cadet Force Instructional Techniques that are used to train cadets and gave them an understanding of planning and preparing training, delivering and assessing said training and evaluating performance and identifying improvements. All the Cadets that undertook JCIC training passed the course, and are now Junior Cadet Instructors!

Throughout the weekend, over 200 subject passes were achieved across all the subjects covered. Two Henley Cadets received promotions on the weekend. Cadet Joe Scott-Wood received a promotion to Lance Corporal, and Lance Corporal James Ferguson received a promotion to Corporal! Congratulations to you both!

Additionally, Henley Detachment's very own Mel Fearn received a well-deserved promotion to Lieutenant. Huge congratulations, Ma'am!



Oxfordshire Army Cadets - Navigation training

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

The 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.