



WINTER 2025/26



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HELLO READERS!

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter. Happy New Year and welcome to 2026. I hope you all had a great festive break. As I write this it certainly is very bleak and dreary winter weather with freezing temperatures. Spring is hopefully close by! I am happy to report that this year's Henley Poppy Appeal was very successful with more volunteers than usual collecting. A total of £41,132 was raised compared to £39,000 last year for the same period. thank you to all who helped. Our branch continues to thrive, with some new members joining and a record attendance of 60 for our Christmas Lunch at Menza. Tim Came and I hope to start some evening talks to non-members so that we might 'Press Gang' new members who are unable to attend lunch talks due to work commitments. All in all, I hope it will be a fabulous year, albeit without the celebration of any significant anniversaries, but don't worry they will start to come around again soon!

TTFN

Richard Pinches

Counting Poppy Appeal
tins at Bicester.



CONTENTS

List of upcoming events.
RBL event reports.

Remembrance Service
Photo: Henley Herald



EVENT CALENDER

Timings - 2nd Thursday every month. Venue - Henley Rugby Club, Menza Cafe. Talk at 11.30am (be seated by 11.20am) and lunch 12.30pm. We very much look forward to seeing you and don't forget that you are welcome to bring guests and gather at the bar from 10.45 am. before moving to the adjoining meeting room for the talk and lunch which is a hot main course or an alternative vegetarian dish, pudding, and coffee/tea.

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

Book with Karen by email: HenleyOnThames.Secretary@rbl.community or phone her on 07990 833241. Then pay £20 for the lunch preferably by Bank Transfer to:

PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE NEW £20 LUNCH FEE

RBL Henley
Acc 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.

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. Please put a note in your car window saying RBL Lunch.



UPCOMING 2026 EVENTS

Thursday 12th Feb 2026 Lt Col Nick Launders talks to Julian Brookes about "Operation Caesar". A daring German project to transfer vital war material, top secret information and leading scientists from Germany to the Japanese during World War 2; by submarine from Germany to Penang, Malaya.

Thursday 12th March 2026 Tim Healey a Journalist, Broadcaster & Author, will give a talk on "Drovers' Roads in Oxfordshire & Beyond"

Thursday 9th April 2026 Tim Came on "The Work of the Bletchley Park Code Breakers". Tim will give a personal insight in the role of his great uncle Sir Stuart Milner-Barry.

Thursday 14th May 2026 'The Sport of Kings and Paupers' insight into horse racing by David Lees.

Thursday 11th June 2026 Roy Larkin, Transport Historian & Author – "The Cost of War". Covering aspects of war that are rarely, if ever, considered.

Saturday 27th June 2026 Armed Forces Day collecting for Poppy Appeal

Thursday 9th July 2026 No luncheon talk due to Summer recess.

Thursday 13th Aug 2026 Afternoon tea and quiz.

Thursday 10th Sept 2026 Richard Pinches talks about Henley in the Civil war.

Thursday 8th Oct 2026 AGM, Stan Ainsley on Thames Lock Keeping.

Sunday 8th Nov 2026 Remembrance Sunday Lunch – No Speaker.

Monday 14th Dec 2026 Christmas Lunch – No Speaker.

2025 POPPY APPEAL

Once again Henley has shown its dedication to support the Poppy Appeal. The launch on the 26th October had Market Place packed with people enjoying Sam Brown's fabulous Ukulele Band. Our branch Vice-Chairman, Tim Came had the honour of presenting Mayor Tom Buckley with the first official Poppy.



We had more volunteers than the previous years. Including some excellent support from local investment firm Invesco who supplied over a dozen volunteers who stoically did 8 hour shifts!



As per usual, our local Army Sea and Marine Cadets were out in force in the previous Saturday to Remembrance Sunday. In total they raised over £1,900 on that day alone.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE AND LUNCH

This year's Remembrance Service was very well attended, Father Jeremy led the service from the Town Hall. RBL Chairman Richard Pinches gave the Exhortation and the Kohima Epitaph. Henley Mayor, Tom Buckley, gave a very well received speech as well as 3 Henley Cadets who recited Remembrance poems. The Mayor's excellent speech included mention of his Catholic Irish upbringing where Remembrance was not remembered, but now living in Henley he appreciates its values.



Photo: Henley Herald

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

In the build up to Remembrance, John Green and Richard Pinches were invited to attend the Grove Academy in Slough to participate in special live streamed Q & A where pupils asked questions about the Two World Wars. John answered as though he was his WWI veteran father and Richard spoke for his WW2 veteran father. All questions were very insightful, the whole school had been involved in studying conflicts ahead of the Remembrance period.



LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR

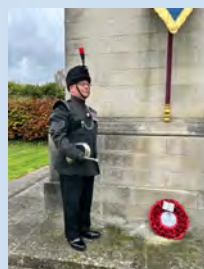


December 1st had the Henley RBL/Poppy Appeal host the opening night of the Henley Living Advent Calendar. Originally scheduled for outside the Town Hall it was thankfully moved inside to the committee room at the last minute due to poor weather. The Happy Gurkha provided lovely warm Momos and Daal with beverages supplied by the RBL.

The surprise act was Singer Stephen Lock accompanied by Daisy Smith of Henley Town Council. £410 was raised for the Poppy Appeal by the raffle from a fantastic selection of donated prizes.



BUGLER ATTENDS HIS BATTALION HQ



Serving army musician, bugler and Henley RBL branch member Gary Hamilton played at six events over the Remembrance period. He participated in a memorial concert at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum and at Remembrance Sunday in Reading. In that same week he played with the Oxford University Press Orchestra, the Henley Symphony Orchestra and at Goldsmiths Hall.



On 11/11 all the buglers from The Rifles were busy across the county, so Gary also became the bugler in the Battalion HQ in Brock Barracks.