



THE NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021



BR0753

RBL 100 A century of service

The Royal British Legion was formed in the aftermath of the First World War when on 15 May, a wet and dreary day, a small number of ex-Servicemen walked to the Cenotaph war memorial in London's Whitehall. As Big Ben struck nine, four men representing societies that for three years had been rivals laid a wreath at the base of the memorial.

On that wreath were the badges of the four organisations that came together to fight the injustices faced by those returning home after service and would officially amalgamate to form the British Legion in 2021

From the beginning we campaigned for fair treatment of those who had given so much for their country during the war and provided much needed welfare support and comradeship to millions.

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The Royal British Legion Centenary Award

Whilst on the subject of our Centenary, John Green, past Chairman and now President of the Henley and Peppard Branch has been the recipient of a very special award.

Read more inside....



100 years on we continue to respond to the changing needs of the Armed Forces community, providing small interventions to life-changing, and sometimes lifesaving, support.



Dear Members and Friends

To mark the moment of our founding, we are recreating the activity of that day by laying a wreath at 9am on Saturday 15th on the Town Hall steps under the rule of six.

Additionally, not to let the Covid situation derail our plans, and keeping within the Government restriction we are pleased and proud to let you know that despite all, we have been able to organise a service to commemorate the last hundred years of this venerable organisation in a most fitting manner and all conducted in accordance with the current restrictions applicable to church services. *Anne Evans*

This special Service will take place on 15 May at 12 noon in St Mary the Virgin Church in Henley-on-Thames by kind invitation of the Rector Fr Jeremy Tayler

St Mary's is a big space and so can accommodate a good number of people while still adhering to the Covid-19 restrictions

Royal British Legion Centenary Award

Whilst on the subject of our Centenary, John Green, past Chairman and now President of the Henley and Peppard Branch has been the recipient of a very special one-off Centenary Award.

The citation reads - *John's background as an Army officer and then a senior executive for Gillette, with international responsibilities, has given him an ability to lead, to organize and to manage people.*

John was elected Branch Chairman in 2012 and has since put all those attributes to work to motivate the Branch Committee.

His leadership, drive and passion were put to the test as over the years the Branch worked towards increasing membership by word of mouth and personal contact from around 70 to 121 to date, and at a time when other branches were struggling.

He established a close relationship with the Town Hall, the local newspapers and community. He has developed a warm relationship with the Army, Sea and Air Cadets, and together with a new-style award-winning quarterly Newsletter which reaches not only our members but the community in general through libraries, churches, doctor's surgeries and social media, has substantially increased the RBL's profile and standing in the community. The launch of the Poppy Appeal each year is accompanied by Sam Brown's ukulele band instigated by John and is an eagerly anticipated event.

As a human being John just seems to want to do good naturally. He reflects his passion for the Royal British Legion as he goes about his daily life. What he does for the members and community is not done out of duty alone, he does them because he passionately believes in the outcome of his service as a RBL member, as Chairman of our Branch, and now as President and Standard Bearer.

His friends and family are in no doubt where his priorities lie and they have learnt that there is no point in encouraging him to take it easy as age creeps on. He is determined to carry on doing what he knows will help the most.



Dates for your Diary

Meetings out of lockdown are held on 3rd Monday of the month unless otherwise advised

-Venue – The Christ Church Centre

Talk 11.30 (please be seated by 11.20) Lunch 12 for 12.30 - **Please** book for lunch by the Thursday before by email to info@rbl-henley.org or phone Anne on **01491 578238**

May 15 - Centenary Service 12 Noon in St Mary's Church, conducted in accordance with the current restrictions applicable to church services. St Mary's is a large church and as such can accommodate a fair amount of suitably distanced congregation. Four Standards will be present, Henley Branch, Peppard, Army Cadets and Veterans.

Book your place by phone 01491 578238 or email to info@rbl-henley.org.

May 17 - Coffee Morning - 11am on Zoom (joining details below)

Topic: Members's Coffee Morning

Time: May 17, 2021 11:00

June 21 - Venue to be provided in due course

July 19 - Christ Church Centre, Luncheon - The Honourable Artillery Company's Light Cavalry presented by John Hudson, a member of the HAC.

John is a member of the Light Cavalry that was reformed as a ceremonial unit of the Honorable Artillery Company in 1979. In April 2004, the Captain General of the HAC, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, presented a Royal Warrant to the Light Cavalry that enacts the rights and responsibilities of this sub-unit of her famous Regiment.

August 16

September 20

October 18

November 14 - Remembrance Sunday Parade

December - Christmas Lunch - date provided in due course

Simply follow the 'Join Zoom Meeting' link below and use the Meeting ID and Passcode provided below

May 17 Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83741453630?pwd=eEoxdXF2azV4NTlBY1BqM2MyblIRUT09>

Meeting ID: **837 4145 3630**

Passcode: **534606**



The town falls silent to mark the death of the Duke of Edinburgh

As always the people of Henley came together to mark an historic event as we took part in a nationwide ceremony at 3 o'clock led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson when Prince Phillip's funeral service at Windsor Castle started. The standard bearers John Green and James Nelson dipped the Legion's standards and Mayor Ken Arlett and his wife, deputy Mayor David Eggleton, Lynda Atkins Deputy Lieutenant and RBL Branch Chairman Anne Evans, together with members of the public who were sitting on benches and at tables in the square, bowed their heads and observed one minute silence.

Captain Tom - 100 Challenge

'During the pandemic Captain Tom Moore stepped up to support the NHS Covid-19 by taking his famous walk and inspiring millions to donate. We were offered the chance in the spirit of Captain Tom to raise funds for your chosen charity. Two members of our branch stepped up to the challenge.



Ania Kozniowska "Over the four days of the May Bank Holiday weekend, to commemorate Captain Tom's 100th birthday on 30 April 2020 and in honour of the Royal British Legion's Centenary, I had set a target of rowing 20 miles from Goring to Henley, swimming at least 60 lengths in a 25m pool and hiking at least 20 miles in the Chilterns over 4 days, total: 100. This I managed to do with a bit to spare.

The row on Saturday was great fun, passing through a number of Thames locks and being greeted both by other river users and by supporters in the locks. However, my proudest moment was completing 64 lengths in the pool (1 mile), not having swum for nigh on 20 years, bar one practice session and the odd infrequent splash around in a pool with friends.

The hiking was the easiest of the three activities and greatly enhanced by walking to meet up with John Green at the Black Horse in Checkendon on Friday, as part of his 100 km challenge in WW1 uniform. I salute him! I have almost doubled my target for the Royal British Legion, with thanks to all those who supported me in achieving this.



John Green in support of the Royal British Legion set himself the challenge to march 100 kms in the Chiltern hills between 30th April and 3rd May in full World War 1 uniform and carrying a de-activated rifle with pitstops at the Blue Tin Farm Shop Cafe and Black Horse pub in Checkendon to take on fuel and refreshment.

John says the overall impression was of the massive support received from family and friends but especially from cyclists, motorists and hikers encountered during the three day trek. Those met en route contributed £368 in cash while the total so far, including gift aid, is £2635. So well worth the effort! Not just the fiscal support received but the many expressions of encouragement. Following are some examples 'Good to share a rest and chat with you on a log at Cookley Green - we completed the rest of our walk with a spring in our step - thank you for inspiring us.' and 'Lovely to meet you yesterday on our Mighty Walk. You inspired us to continue.' 'We much appreciated letting our young son have his photo taken holding your rifle. He now says he wants to join the Army' These show the generosity of spirit still to be found once you make contact with people. By the way of a bonus I found 4 golf balls walking through Nuffield golf course!"

RBL believes that children are our future champions of Remembrance and have the potential to reintroduce Remembrance into families. There is an increasingly important role (and demand) for The Royal British Legion to bridge the education gap. The Remembrance team at the Legion produces educational materials that can be shared with schools, affiliated Youth Groups, and branches. Educational resources focus on.

- Understanding what Remembrance is
- Understanding who we Remember
- And looking at different backgrounds and types of service and sacrifice

We would like you to share the link to our Poppy the Pigeon Club as widely as you like so that we can gauge the interest. It matters not if the recipients are members or not. It may even get you enquiries to the branch which can be developed into members? <https://www.facebook.com/PoppyThePigeonClub>

