

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 28th January 2020
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

R.C. East - President
R.J. White - Chairman
P. Davies - Vice Chairman, Ceremonial Officer and Deputy Standard Bearer
P. A. Cox - Secretary, Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser and Welfare Representative
Mrs S. E. Pateman - Membership Secretary
S. T. Haycox - Treasurer

COMMITTEE: G Street, J Belton

MEMBERS: A Bailey

1. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present; he asked those present to bear in mind Vice President Brian Mulford who passed away recently, and all who suffer in the service of our County

This was followed by the exhortation and silent tribute; he ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: Mrs. H. Benton C.S East

3. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 2019 MEETING

All present had not seen the Minutes which were distributed before the meeting. There were the following corrections:

Item 7.4 Distribution of Branch Minutes

“The October 2018 Minutes were distributed..” corrected to “..2019..”

On acceptance as a true record they were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman said that all Matters Arising would come up in the reports.

5. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND ARMISTICE 2019

5.1 Letters of Thanks

The Ceremonial Officer has written a letter to the Brownie Standard Bearer for attending the Commonwealth War Graves Ceremony, it has been approved by the Chairman and sent.

The Secretary has written to Harwell School, Little Pippins Pre-School, Parish Council, Bugler, Harwell Gardeners Club, Photographers and the Church. They have been approved by the Parish Council (as appropriate) and Chairman and sent.

5.2 Publicity

The Ceremonial Officer wrote an article which has been published in the Harwell News and posted on the Web page.

5.3 Timetable

The Secretary has composed a second version of the timetable of tasks which will be distributed shortly. The third version will be composed and distributed now all tasks have been completed.

5.4 War Memorial Service Names Enquiry

The Harwell Parish History Group passed on an enquiry regarding the names of women read out at the War Memorial Service. The Harwell Parochial Church Council Secretary Jane Woolley (who composed the list of names) and the Rector Jonathan Mobey (who read the names out) confirmed that the names of Kathleen Seacole and Unity Caudwell were read out. The Ceremonial Officer provided some additional information.

6. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There were no new members this month on the MAP system and no applications.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

7.1 Harwell RBL Club and Branch Archives at Club

Old Harwell RBL Club documents - Nothing to report.

Branch Archive Boxes – Move of old documents to County Record Office is in hand

7.2 Web Page Updates

- The Welfare page has been updated with the latest contact details – new email and new “Pop in Centre” Location at Aylesbury.
- The Poppy Appeal page has been updated with a report on the Remembrance wreaths and latest totals. It needs updating again to include the new venue for the Poppy Walk.
- The Remembrance page has been updated with this year’s report. New photos to go on as we have removed links to the old ones.

7.3 Awards

Ongoing.

7.4 Distribution of Branch Minutes

The November 2019 Minutes and December 2019-January 2020 County Circular were distributed to Officers and Committee Members via email and printed copies. Copies will be put in the Club folder. David Marsh has put the Minutes on the Branch web page.

7.5 Printing Volumes and Costs

November Minutes and December & January County Circular approximately 69 sheets.
Other printing approximately 50 sheets.

The Secretary has got the empty large black cartridge refilled for £10. The other large black cartridge has also run out so he will get that refilled too.

7.6 2019 AGM Follow-up

- The MS1 and County Conference forms were delivered to County Office.
- A new Officers and Committee list has been put on the Notice Board.
- The Secretary continues to back up minutes to Onedrive, hard disc and the MAP.

Other actions are in hand, including the Letter of Thanks to David Marsh, the AGM Minutes and the back-up of older minutes and files to the MAP.

7.7 Branch Management Course

The Secretary attended the course on 30th November at County HQ. Lunch was provided and travel expenses were reimbursed.

The course was good, there was a significant amount of new information, as well as clarification on the existing procedures and tasks. However, some items seem to have been modified in the new Management Handbook received this month. The Secretary will check with the County Secretary.

7.8 Agenda Order

The order of Agenda items 11 to 13 has been changed for this meeting.

7.9 Branch Community Support - Welfare

Enquiry received about a member from Didcot who has been in hospital and is now moving to a local care home. The Welfare Representative replied explaining that we have no volunteers to visit and passed on the National Contact Centre number.

Visitor volunteer report submitted – 0 volunteers and 2 funerals.

The Welfare Representative attended the half-day County Welfare Update meeting at Hanney RBL Club on 3rd December. This was a useful update.

The key points were:

- All BCS volunteers now need to undertake training and have a Disclosure Barring and Safeguarding check (formerly known as Criminal Record check), including the Welfare Representative as he could be involved in recruiting volunteers.
- Information on logging cases on the BCS part of the MAP system including Data Protection requirements.
- Local Touch Points and lunches - a regular commitment is required to run these.

The BCS Representative is following up with the member that may be interested in becoming a Case Worker.

7.10 Funeral of Vice President Brian Mulford

The Secretary passed on details of the funeral to Committee and County President.

The County MSO said that the Secretary can send a copy of the picture taken outside the Club including the Vice President, and the citations his County Certificate and Gold badge to his family. He asked if the meeting agreed.

Agreed.

It was stated that he did a great deal towards building the Club.

The Secretary also suggested that this is mentioned in the next County Circular.

Agreed.

8. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 80

This includes some renewals and the new members mentioned at the last meeting.

9. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 1st January 2020

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 435.65
B.F.I. Account	<u>£ 820.33</u>
Total:	<u>£ 1255.98</u>

9.1 Receipts

Interest of £4.54 has been received to the BFI account.

£135 has been transferred to the Current account from the Legacy fund.

9.2 BFI Total

The Treasurer said that BFI account statement arrived this morning. There was a small discrepancy between the balance on the statement and the balance given by logging into LOMAS. He has asked County if they can explain the difference.

It was suggested that this could be a transposition error.

9.3 Legacy Transfer

After a year of enquiries, the £135 requested from the Legacy fund has been transferred to the Current account over Christmas. This amount was requested to cover all expenditure including expenses and donations to the Poppy Appeal for wreaths etc in the previous accounting year as the deceased would have wanted.

9.4 Legacy Statement and Interest

The statement arrived over Christmas; three months late. The Treasurer distributed a couple of copies amongst those present. It is very good news, though it has taken a year to get to this point.

Interest of £203.55 has been received, which is more than the £135 withdrawn, so the Legacy fund has grown a little. The statement shows this correctly. Now we know the system is working we can withdraw a little more.

9.5 Collection at Brian Mulford's Funeral

The Chairman said that the notice in the Oxford Mail states this will go towards the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Harwell Branch of the Legion.

9.6 LOMAS Course

The Treasurer will be attending a course in March.

The President encouraged the Treasurer to keep up the good work.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence from Legion County Office and National Headquarters:

10.1 December 2019 / January 2020 County Circular

Attachments:

- Final Agenda for County Conference 2020
- Christmas Together 2020 Initiative Questions and Answers
- National Training Course Application
- Astor Big Band Concert Reading Sunday 2nd February 2020

10.2 Membership E-Newsletter December 2019

- To thank members for everything you did in November and throughout the year to support the Armed Forces community. Including a short introduction from the National Chairman.
- Upcoming events and a poll about your suggestions about stories or information you'd like to see in upcoming e-newsletters.

10.3 Membership E-Newsletter January 2020

- How members are taking the Legion forward and how the Legion helps the Armed Forces community. Including two stories from our branches as well as interesting videos about the Legion's work.
- Upcoming events and a poll about to let us know what the biggest challenges are when considering becoming a Branch Officer.

10.4 Weekly Site Briefings – List of Pitches Legion Regular Giving Lottery Sales Team

The team has visited Abingdon and Reading and will visit Oxford this week.

10.5 Reminder: The Legion's General Election Manifesto and Letter to Candidates

As received in November

10.6 Reminder: Deadline for Nominations to be Legion National Trustees is 17th January

With elections pack and timeline for elections.

10.7 County Conference Documents

Provisional Agenda, Minutes of 2019 Conference, 2019 Financial report

10.8 Strategic Review Updated Questions and Answers

More answers added on the review of beneficiary services.

10.9 Strategic Review Update

Confirmation of closure of the Break Centres and Handyman Services. Funds to be used instead to provide more individual support and help other in areas such as the care homes. Other information about further reviews on Welfare and more support to Remembrance will be issued early this year.

10.10 Request for Information on Connections with the 3 Last Battle of Britain Pilots

10.11 New Royal Charter and Membership Handbook Issued.

Both are significantly shorter than previous versions and easier to read, there seems to be less requirements on Branches.

The Royal Charter is on the National Website, the Handbook can only be accessed if you have a MAP account.

10.12 Arctic Russian Convoys Commemoration (Non RBL)

The Russian Arctic Convoy Project will be holding a 75th Anniversary Memorial Event on Saturday 16th May 2020 to mark the end of the Russian Arctic convoys and World War II. This will be held at Inverasdale by the shores of Loch Ewe, Wester Ross, Scotland.

10.13 MAP Portal or Yammer Updates

- Membership reports not produced 13/1/20.

Correspondence from Other Organisations:

10.14 December 2019 and January 2020 Chilton Chronicle

The January 2020 issue includes the Chilton Poppy Appeal total.

10.15 Team BRIT News December and Christmas Updates

10.16 Marketing Emails to the Branch Website Email Address

12 Items since the last month 2019 meeting (9 weeks)

11. CERMONIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

11.1 Christmas Cards from Chilton School

A teacher from Chilton School called at the Ceremonial Officer's House in Newbury on Saturday 21st December and handed over a bag of 26 cards made by her year 6 pupils, all addressed "To A Hero". There was also a sheet which said that the pupils had been learning about War and Conflict and the work that the Legion carries out, and decided to create the cards. The teacher asked that the Ceremonial Officer passes these on appropriately.

The Ceremonial Officer was concerned to pass these on in good time, but it was the Saturday before Christmas, and the start of the Christmas shutdown for many locations. He discussed the situation with the Secretary and Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser, they were unaware of any Legion scheme in progress. It was also unusual that the teacher had taken them to him in Newbury, rather than any of the more locally based Branch Officers.

Given the circumstances, the Ceremonial Officer proposed that he take the letters to Vauxhall Barracks. This was agreed by the Secretary and Chilton PAO. An Officer at the Barracks said that they were happy to receive the cards, and the Ceremonial Officer delivered them there on 23rd December. The Officer informed him that the cards had been

distributed to those working over Christmas. The Ceremonial Officer has informed Chilton School, but heard nothing further.

Andrew Bailey said that he had received a card whilst serving in Afghanistan, everyone had received one or two. This could have been via the Legion. The usual procedure was for cards to be delivered to the UK bases in October for onward delivery in November. Forces including from local bases are still serving overseas. If cards are delivered in October, then something can be organised; they will be sent somewhere.

The Chairman thanked the Ceremonial Officer for his work on this.

12. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

12.1 Upcoming Parades

The Ceremonial Officer reported that Vice President's funeral is on 31st January. The Secretary passed a request from the family to the Standard Bearer, who will parade the Standard. Standard Bearers from other Branches may also attend, there is no formal procedure to inform us if so, they may inform the Standard Bearer.

13. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER REPORT:

13.1 Poppy Appeal 2019

Harwell Collections

The Ricardo tuck shop collection has been paid in and confirmed as £135, to make their total £187.75, very good for one building, the Harwell PAO has given them a thank you poster.

Remaining Campus Collection

One batch of 8 boxes was collected, counted with the Chilton PAO and Treasurer at the Harwellian Club and banked, total £393.28.

A second batch of two boxes was collected and counted by the PAOs and banked, total £94.74.

The Campus security guards will inform us when the last two boxes are available at the security gate.

The Harwell Collection total is now £2,507.77 (including the Remembrance Sunday bucket collection).

Thank You cards

These have been written by the Harwell PAO and distributed by the President and Harwell PAO.

The Chilton and Harwell PAOs have submitted articles to the Chilton Chronicle and Harwell News. The totals are also on the Branch web page.

13.2 Annual Return to Poppy HQ

This report details the totals in our area and has been submitted.

13.3 Return and Storage of Merchandise and Collecting Boxes

The merchandise, collecting boxes, Poppies and kids packs, 11 parcels in all, were picked up on 10th January. A breakdown of the numbers of returned items was sent as requested.

The Chilton PAO is storing the merchandise trays, some were in a poor condition and have been disposed of.

The Harwell PAO is storing 3 wreaths, a box of 100 crosses and a few wristbands and reflectors.

The coin counter has not yet been returned due to the delays above and illness.

13.4 Apology from HQ

The PAOs have received a phone call and letter of apology from Poppy HQ about the problems this year with the low stocks, late delivery of merchandise and wreaths, and a list of steps they are going to take to address the issues.

13.5 Long Service Awards

In hand.

13.6 Poppy Walk 2020

An enquiry has been received and passed to the County Fundraiser.

13.7 Poppy Appeal Community Awards and Seminar September 2020

We can nominate organisations e.g. youth groups that have helped.

13.8 Theme for 2020

This year's theme is "Coming Home", about the return of servicemen and women and evacuees to be reunited with their families at the end of World War 2, and resettlement to civilian life, which could be joyous and challenging.

VE and VJ day pin badges will be available.

13.9 Totals

The Harwell PAO has not yet resolved the difference between the total banked with the total on the Annual statement for 2018-19.

Including the Ricardo Tuck shop box, and 10 boxes from the Campus Organisations:

Total Collected since 1st October 2019: £ 4428.92

Thank you to everyone who has helped.

13.10 Remembrance Sunday 2019 Wreaths and Crosses on Commonwealth War Graves

The Harwell PAO asked about donations for the two wreaths with Legion badges supplied to the Branch and 67 Poppy crosses placed on the War Graves.

Discussion ensued and the following proposal was made. The Harwell PAO did not participate in the discussion or vote.

PROPOSAL: That the Branch donates £25 for each wreath and £75 for the Crosses to the Poppy Appeal.

PROPOSED: Chairman

CARRIED

14. COUNTY CONFERENCE REPORT

Berkshire County Conference 2020

Branch Delegate report for January 2020 Branch Meeting, by Peter Davies, Branch Vice-Chairman

County Presidents address

Following my predecessor Sir Thomas's annual theme, the President made no apology in pushing membership recruitment.

Attendance is reducing at Branch meetings, and membership is falling – this is seen across the whole charity sector and not unique to the RBL.

There are however Branches which have managed to increase their membership, examples in the County including linking with Church activities and holding Branch lunches to invite potential members.

Why not consider other organisations to join? The County President gave an example of a veterans group he has joined and made strong links with the RBL, the money raised from this group in raffles is often donated to the Poppy Appeal.

All are asked to consider the GDPR tick box on the MS1 form; we have no PAO details in the county Handbook.

We have an exciting year ahead with VE and VJ Day 75 celebrations and commemorations; the first of these is the Annual Poppy Walk, branded the "Victory Walk" in recognition of the VE Day 75 theme running through May and is held at Ardington on Sunday 3rd May.

County Chairman's Report

A big thank you to the County Committee, Women's Section and the very many Standard Bearers who have supported County Events and the Chairman over the year.

Compliance was pushed in 2019 and the county now has 98% successful submission of MS1 and Accounts on time. Thank you for listening to this push and acting upon it. We hope this trend continues in 2020.

A push for County Committee members to come forward, we need some fresh faces.

Please let County know (ideally by March) if any Branch is considering any plans or events are being held in 2021 for the 100 year Centenary of the RBL.

- We'd be grateful to hear of any ideas members have for ideas to recognise this significant milestone.

Treasurer's Financial Report

George was not available and so this was not discussed, but the finances were issued.

Strategic plan.

This was delivered by Jim Sibbald the County Vice-Chairman and was an engaging segment with very realistic and achievable goals, which is taking the County in the right direction.

18 Branches are still to decide on BCS (Branch Community Support) scheme

Area Representative sends apologies

County Fundraisers

For the first time in the County's history we have raised over £1million, with the total for 2018-2019 standing at £1,084,000 thanks in part to the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI, with ALL branches showing an increase in their totals.

The annual poppy launch at the Armed Forces Raceday at Newbury Racecourse is always a big event raising lots of money at the start of the campaign. Unfortunately due to the bad weather this event was cancelled in 2019 which is likely to show in the end of year total.

Planned events in 2020 are likely to be centred around and themed around the VE and VJ Day 75 commemorations, expect plenty of events in May and August – please let the CFMs know if you are planning any events.

The Fundraisers award was poorly adopted last year and so giving this a big push in 2020 for “Community Fundraiser awards” these can nominate and Cadet/Youth Groups, Companies or organisations, school or anyone else you feel in the Community has aid the RBL/Poppy Appeal

Ceremonial report is tabled

However promotion of an Armed Forces Day parade on 27th June is taking place in Windsor. This will be BIG event with a Senior Royal in attendance, we would like as many RBL standards represented as possible.

Address by Gary Ryan, Director of Remembrance and Marketing.

Discussed various commemoration events which took place in 2019, much of the effort centred around D-Day75 which included plenty of television coverage, which all in all if stitched together would be 24 hours of reporting on D-Day75 events.

A BIG Ceremonial event for VE Day 75 will be on Friday 8th May (the moved bank holiday) and we are expecting a veterans March down the Mall.

We are seeing more diversity in the Legion, with the first LGBT+ Branch opened and recognition of the 20 years since the ban on lifted on LGBT+ joining the armed forces. Safeguarding remains an important element for everyone, which comes with its added challenges in a voluntary organisation.

The Legion needs to keep pace with the public’s use of technology, particularly with ways to make donations; over £200k was made in 2019 using contactless payments. While £5.6million came from the Poppy Shop.

Events are held on a National and Local scale are great, although could perhaps work better together, linking in to each other’s strengths and promotions.

We also need to consider working better with other (military themed) charities, 10 years ago we would have considered these our competition, but this is not how we should see them today, we are all striving for the same money and to use it in the same way – to help others.

Efforts should not just be National or Local but about the greater community support.

Guest Speaker General Sir Mike Jackson

The General gave a very entertaining and interesting account of his time over his 45 years service in the Army working in and with the Russians.

Venue for future Conferences.

2021 Tilehurst, 2022, Wantage, 2023 Lambourn

The motion

The motion was passed by the delegates and so the motion will be put to the Annual Conference.

Open forum

March 21st The ship's crew of HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier has the Freedom of Wantage and will be a large Military Parade.

Talk to your local councils about supporting any VE / VJ Day 75 events.

The Vice Chairman additionally mentioned:

- Awards presented at Conference - as listed in the February County Circular.
- The Campus could be nominated for a Community award for organising the D Day 75 Talk and Vigil.
- There are other more local events on Armed Forces Day on 27th June.
- The Freedom of Wantage Parade would be like the Freedom Parade ten years ago, with bands etc.
- The Motion was to request the trustees to re-consider their decision to close the break centres. There are different views across the Legion on this subject.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Poppy Walk

The Ceremonial Officer said that he has assisting with this event for many years as it had started and finished here. This year's walk will be on 3rd May, this date has been selected because the early-May bank holiday is on Friday 8th May.

The walk will start and finish at Ardington instead of Harwell. This is not against what the Harwellian Club has done for the past 15 years. Ardington Branch is keen to help, and can provide a barbeque which was less easy to find last year. It also offers a chance to refresh the event:

The same route has been used for the last 15 years, and there are several points where it crosses busy roads. The new route from Ardington could encourage people back that have stopped participating due to the same route being used each year and it is off road so safer. The Ceremonial Officer will be participating.

15.2 Harwell Commonwealth War Graves Schools Initiative

Andrew Bailey said that he volunteers with the Vale and Oxfordshire Group of the "Eyes On Hands On" initiative of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which looks after isolated War Graves in this area. These are usually small groups of graves such as at Harwell, rather than the large Cemeteries. They work to raise the public profile of the graves, and visit them to check they are being looked after and in a good condition, if not then repair or replacement may be arranged.

He is proposing a new initiative to raise the profile of the Commonwealth War Graves in Harwell Village Cemetery:

The background is that Dutch children have for many years adopted a War Grave in the local cemetery and lay flowers at the grave each year, to commemorate the sacrifices made and to ensure each grave is visited, e.g. at the Oosterbeek Arnhem Cemetery. This is passed down in families through the generations.

The proposal for Chilton and Harwell is that some of the local schoolchildren could adopt or sponsor a Harwell War Grave. They could learn about the serviceman or woman, and lay flowers, a Poppy or a wooden cross on or near Armistice Day each year. There are 68 graves so the pupils in the top one or two classes in each school could adopt one grave each.

The War Graves include the grave of a soldier from World War 1 and one sailor from the 1960s. The rest are of servicemen and women from World War 2, mainly British and Commonwealth airmen who were flying out of RAF Harwell. Some of the airmen came from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, so their graves are only rarely visited.

There is information about the servicemen and women and the circumstances in which they gave their lives on line including the CWGC website. The CWGC has an education officer who can visit the schools.

He is approaching the Branch first as we organise the Remembrance and Armistice parades and are in contact with the schools already. He suggested that we could contact the schools to see if they are interested.

Discussion ensued and comments included:

- The President visits the schools at around Armistice Day each year and the Education Officer could visit before that, possibly in the Summer term.
- The President said that he had only been aware of one visit to one of the graves of overseas airmen.
- There was some discussion of education on history in schools nationally.
- The Chairman said that the fallen are not to be forgotten.

It was proposed that the Secretary write to the Schools.

Agreed by the Meeting.

15.3 Harwell War Memorial Repairs

John Belton said that one of the stone plaques still needs repair, his grandson is willing to help but has heard nothing from the Parish Council so far. He had undertaken a previous job at the memorial at no charge, but this may not be the case for this repair.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 25th February 2019

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:12 hours.