

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 30th June 2015
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

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

COMMITTEE: G Street, J Belton

MEMBERS: None.

1. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

The Vice Chairman presided in the absence of the Chairman. She opened the meeting by welcoming all present. This was followed by the exhortation and silent tribute; she ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: R.J. White, Ian Clarke, J Fleming, B. Mulford.

3. MINUTES OF THE MAY 2015 MEETING:

The Vice Chairman asked if all present had seen the Minutes. All had, so the minutes were not read out. There were no corrections.

The Vice Chairman asked if they could be accepted as a true record. On acceptance they were duly signed by the Vice Chairman

4. MATTERS ARISING:

The Vice Chairman said that all matters arising would come up under the following reports.

5. DDAY AND CHILTON FESTIVAL 2015 See also item 11.

5.1 Ceremonial Officer's Report

The Ceremonial Officer read the following report:

This was the third year Harwell Branch has coordinated this parade and is recognised and the managing body as groups approach us to attend which can only be a positive for future events to continue.

Building on last year's success of the 70th anniversary, we received a selection of returning requests to attend and quick acceptances to our invitations, proof that people in the community want to be involved.

With a smaller Chilton festival, relocated to the village and a less significant year the crowds were noticeably smaller compared to last, however I believe still growing as the years go on.

I should indicate here that this was one of the least prepared Parades I have coordinated for the Branch. Due to the pressures of work at the start of the year I have not had the spare time to allocate the various aspects which need consideration, writing invitations, composing press releases or meetings with cooperating groups.

However I am pleased to say that this appeared to have little effect on the interest and desire of those invitees to attend. Although I will confess this was most obvious when coordinating the order of the wreath layers, a hurried list with last years and edits of expected attendees this year did create some confusion but fortunately this was quickly rectified. (a lesson learnt!)

With the reformation of 38 Group RAF last July I was eager to secure a representative, unfortunately, AOC 38 Group, AVM Bishop although very keen to attend had a clashing event which could not be worked around. I have fingers crossed for next year.

Although missed there was still a fine selection of Uniformed Officers in attendance, including Wg Cdr Chris Mullen, a neighbour to Bob Girling, who is currently serving in Northwood, London who made himself know prior to the day and looks forward to supporting us in future years.

We also saw our most decorated wreath layer in attendance, that of Sir Roger Austin for RAFA, a known local face to some.

A first for the D-Day parade was the addition of the Bagpipes, played in the usual fine proud form by Mr John Macfarlane-Horgan. Dressed in full ceremonial attire, playing Amazing Grace was a fitting accompaniment to the laying of the wreaths, of which 23 are recorded to have been laid from a mix of Civilian authorities, Veterans groups, youth groups and local organisations .

Following the march off a selection of the congregation returned to the Club house to enjoy the refreshments which the branch had laid on

I am pleased to report that the catering was not only well received but suitable in quantity. There were nearly twenty people who returned, and most of the food did go so believe the Branch got good value for money in the catering – I thank the committee for agreeing to fund this.

Yet again we were unable to secure a flypast for the Parade, however I remain positive and determined that we will get there one year. I shall continue to apply via various channels and hope as we build a relationship with AOC 38 Group and we feature more on their calendar something can be coordinated.

I cannot complete this report without some special mentions.

Firstly to **Peter Cox** for his sterling work as Secretary. He is always on the ball and keeps progress moving, particularly useful this year given my reduced availability not offering the free time I would have liked.

Thanks to **Rev Pam Rolls**, for conducting the service in style and manner we are familiar with, and for coordinating with some of the Chilton Groups in attendance.

This leads me neatly to the **Chilton Village Hall Committee** who were kind enough to supply their amplifier speaker which far exceeds to performance of the Harwell Church Coomber system and was able to reach the whole crowd, thanks to **Adrian Maughan** and **Brian Morris** for their work in sorting this.

I cannot forget **Bob Girling**, Chairman of the Festival Committee who not only supports our efforts but advertises and encourages the event in the local community.

To **Wendy Clarke** for coordinating the various requests for wreaths, managing the collection of each donation and distributing these on the day.

Finally to **Duncan Rogers** and his team for preparing the Stone and surrounding area for the Service. There was one troublesome tree branch which featured but it is unfair to mark the efforts down. It is fitting to include recognition of the inclusion of a bench adjacent to the Stone. It was utilised almost immediately by some of the more senior veterans, proof it is well placed and get good use.

All in all the day was an outstanding success.

The weather was an exemplary June day with warm sunshine throughout leading to a cooler pleasant evening temperature for the Service.

Although smaller than last year this was only to be expected, and was still well supported by young and old, dignitary, representative, villager and general public alike.

I hope that there was a good collection from the Poppy Appeal and that the connections we have made in the community continue in the future years.

Discussion ensued:

- The Standard Bearer said that there was a television program “BBC at War” including Richard Dimbleby who took off from RAF Harwell in the first wave of aircraft as a War reporter. There was a short clip of his son Jonathan at the end of the runway.
- John Belton said that the Oxon and Bucks regiment left from RAF Harwell (along with the Green Jackets and others), their association is based in Oxford. They would have been at the D Day ceremony but they now parade at Clifton Hampden at the graveside of Major Howard on the 6th June. They have attended in previous years and could be invited for next year as the dates will not clash. The Territorial Army band from Dalton Barracks could also be invited. The Ceremonial Officer said that he would look into this.

- John Belton said that the bench provided by Harwell Oxford was very good, two war veterans aged 94 used it, he chatted to them afterwards and thanked them for attending.
- The Standard Bearer said that he had a word with Duncan Rogers and the tree near the stone will be pruned. Mr. Rogers has provisionally agreed that all foliage near the stone will be pruned to hedge height before next year's ceremony. Also the path will be resurfaced from paving slabs.
- The President said that it will be a non-slip surface.
- The Vice Chairman asked the Secretary to make a note to remind Mr. Rogers about this if required.

The Ceremonial Officer said that there were a few more items to complete. The Secretary reported on these items:

5.2 Publicity

The Ceremonial Officer's article and some pictures were published in the June Church Broadsheet. The Secretary put the poster up in Wyevale garden centre. The D Day and Chilton Festival posters sent to the Feast Committee but did not seem to appear on their screen in Bobs Butchers.

A report for the Harwell News, Chilton Chronicle, County Circular and Branch website is in hand.

5.3 Thank you letters

The Ceremonial Officer has drafted letters to: Chair of the Vale of the White Horse District Council, Didcot and Wantage Air Training Corps, Chilton Scouts, the Glider Pilots Regiment Association, Parachute Regiment Association, Duncan Rogers and Rev Pam Rolls.

Others to be written include: Didcot Mayor, Chilton and Harwell Parish Councils, Bugler, Bag Piper, First Aider, Harwell Club, Chilton Festival, Chilton School and Royal Air Force Association.

5.4 Service Sheets.

The Secretary estimated attendance at 200 plus the Standard Bearers, ATCs, Scouts and School Children, roughly 250 in all. Duncan Rogers supplied 100 service sheets, the Secretary printed 5 and a couple from last year. All were used, people sharing 1 sheet between 2. The Poppy Appeal Organiser, Hazel King and the Secretary collected 51 for next year

The Poppy Appeal Organiser said that it helped that Rev. Rolls asked at the end of the service for the sheets to be returned – people came to find us.

5.5 Wreaths

The Secretary has photographed all wreaths laid, uploaded the photos to flickr and composed a list.

5.6 Timetable

The Secretary has distributed Version 2 of the timetable. He recorded the start and end times of service and "march in" and "march out" times of the groups. He will compose and distribute a third version when all actions are complete.

5.7 Photographs

Unfortunately the Treasurer was unable to attend, and Bob Girling was unable to take photographs. Frank Dumbleton took photographs which are posted on the Chilton

Community Facebook Page. He has confirmed he took the 2 photographs from 2014. The Secretary has emailed David Marsh asking that the 2014 pictures are posted on the Branch web page credited to Mr. Dumbleton with a link to the 2015 pictures.

The Secretary took some pictures but his view of the service and other duties meant that they were not of a good standard.

The Vice Chairman thanked the Ceremonial Officer and Secretary for their efforts.

6. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There was 1 application this month, the applicant was not present:

O Shevlin (form unsigned)

The Club application form has been passed to Club Committee.
Agreed by Committee.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

7.1 Storage of Branch Documents

Disposal of items listed last month is in hand.

7.2 Archive Boxes in club

The Secretary has had a look through these boxes; he thanked the Club Secretary for lending him a key to the cupboard. Disposal of the items listed last month is in hand.

7.3 Lending Minutes to Harwell History Group and Moving to Oxfordshire Records Office.

No news from County or HQ.

7.4 Branch Web Page

There are currently two accounts, one each on Gmail and AOL which both receive the emails sent to the branch@harwellrbl.co.uk address. The Secretary has compiled some statistics on messages received from late December 2014 to date:

Non Spam: 13 total.

There were 7 replies to emails sent from the account and emails from the account provider. The other 6 were genuine new enquiries to the Legion or replies to invitations sent from the Secretary's email account. Of these 2 were in the Gmail inbox but not in AOL at all, so we would not have received them.

Spam: 482 total.

This is everything else, including marketing and possibly scam emails. There may be some bias towards wrong classification of spam as the software may have "learned" from all emails being kept.

Correctly classified by both (i.e. not present at all or in spam folder) **341.**

Incorrectly classified (i.e. in the inbox) **Gmail 28 AOL 133.**

Therefore the Secretary suggested that he asks David Marsh to disconnect the AOL account from the branch@ address as it seems to reject more genuine emails and gets more spam wrong than the Gmail account. Gmail also provides warnings about suspect emails and has

blocked downloading of some attached files due to viruses in them.

Agreed by the Committee

The Secretary has composed an update to the Poppy Appeal page about the Sponsored Walk and Harwell Feast stand, approved by the PAO. It has been sent to David Marsh who will add it shortly.

7.5 Distribution of Branch Minutes and County Circular.

The Secretary thanked those who checked sections of the minutes and replying so quickly. He distributed the June 2014 County Circular and May 2015 Minutes to Committee Members and put copies in the Club folder. David Marsh will put the minutes on the web site shortly

Approximate Cost: £6.45

Other printing cost: about £ 5.25

The Secretary has brought another small cartridge from Staples using the £6 voucher to get it at £6.47. He is donating the £6.47 again to cover other printing he does. He has just obtained another cartridge direct from HP at £17 (as the packs of 2 mentioned last meeting cost £38).

7.6 HP Printing Instant Ink

The Secretary has contacted the County Membership Support Officer about having a direct debit on his personal account and getting reimbursed via expenses or a direct debit on the Branch account. She is contacting HQ for advice.

It has been suggested that cartridge refill kits are used. This is said to be fiddly and lower quality / permanence but a high cost saving (e.g. £5 from Sainsbury's or similar from Amazon). The kits do a number of refills but a cartridge can only be refilled 6 times. Discussion ensued:

- The Ceremonial Officer said that he had heard this was a fiddle.
- The Treasurer said that there is a shop in Didcot that may refill cartridges.
- The Standard Bearer asked what the Secretary thought as he owns the printer.

The Secretary said that he will investigate further.

7.7 Recruitment of New Members - Extract from Royal Charter

Obtaining / print off RBL leaflets is in hand

7.8 War Memorial

No news.

7.9 Membership Portal and Legion Emails addresses

The Membership Secretary, Ceremonial Officer and Secretary have received the user names and passwords and are familiarising ourselves with the system.

7.10 2014 AGM Follow Up

The AGM Minutes are in hand.

7.11 Stephen Freeman School Fete.

Arrangements to get a link from the National Web site to ours are in hand. There is an address on the National website to contact.

7.12 First Names Read at War Memorial Service

The Church PCC Secretary Jane Woolley has replied asking about the 3 fallen on the list we provided without first names and Robert Lyon not being on the memorial. The list the Rector

reads out is the names on the war memorial and Robert Lyon, so she has taken the names listed on the War Memorial as the definitive list. One name on the list the Branch sent - FWG Davies - is not on the War memorial so his name is not read out.

Mrs. Woolley also said that the Church Administrator Vicki Johnson has asked on the village facebook page - no replies. Kath Luker of the Harwell History Group has found one more first name. That leaves CN Rice (WW2) and W Busby (WW1).

The Secretary has replied explaining about Robert Lyon and that K Seacole was added to the War Memorial recently and that the names of others buried in the Harwell War Graves may yet be added. Also, there are no first names on the War Graves except KF Seacole.

Those present could not help with the first names. The Treasurer suggested that the Imperial War Museum may be a further source of information.

7.13 Insult to Injury Petition

The reply from Ed Vaizey's office to the first petition letter states that the consultation about pre 2005 veterans contributing more to their care has closed. The Secretary suggested that possibly the time to send the second petition letter has passed, or it could be reworded for the new Minister. Or we could wait for the Legion's view on the consultation.

It was stated that as the deadline had passed the second letter should not be sent.

7.14 Visitor Volunteer Return

The Secretary has sent the return to County for May (0 Volunteers and 0 visits).

7.15 Membership Badges

These are £4 each, and a £4 delivery charge applies for orders under £40. The County Membership Support Officer said that the Branch can order a stock for one year or ask other local Branches if they have any spares.

Agreed by the Committee.

The Standard Bearer suggested that the Secretary asks Hanney and Wantage Branches.

7.16 Dogs for the Disabled Talk

The Secretary has replied declining the offer.

7.17 Name of Person Who Maintains War Graves

Yvonne Hinchliffe has got in touch stating that Geoff Richardson of Brookside Harwell maintains the graves so the Secretary has not sent the letter to the Harwell News. He asked if he should compose a letter of thanks. Discussion ensued:

- The Vice Chairman, President and Ceremonial Officer agreed with this.
- The President said that this should be without upsetting him. The Branch appreciates him doing this as it is brought to our attention and we are criticised when it is not done though it is not our responsibility.

7.18 Awards

The Secretary has checked the application forms and Officers board; some of the required information has to be found elsewhere e.g. help with Poppy Appeal, Welfare, Committee membership dates and Vice – Offices dates.

The Secretary has consulted the Senior Branch Officers and checked through the minutes he has on disc and the minutes and paperwork in the archive boxes and now has most of the

information. The County MSO said that the 30th June deadline is set by County and there are a couple of weeks until the next County Committee meeting when any forms will be assessed.

The Secretary said that looking through the documents there may be other awards due to Branch members. He proposed that he consults with the senior Branch Officers about applying for other awards outside the meeting to maintain confidentiality.

Agreed by the Committee.

8. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 276

8.1 Letters to Members Regarding New Renewal Options

The Secretary reported that the County Membership Support Officer states that contrary to the article in Legion magazine these letters have not yet been sent.

9. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 11th June 2015

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 737.43
B.F.I. Account	£ 1175.85
Total:	£ 1913.28

9.1 Comparison to Last Year

The Branch is £5 up on this time last year.

9.2 Outstanding Payments

There are 10 cheques sent to Novacraft for new member's subscriptions which have not been cashed.

9.3 Annual Accounts Audit

The Treasurer has received the forms. The day of this meeting is the Legion's year end. He will print the end-of-year LOMAS report which runs to 22 pages. 3 copies are required. He will ask Lloyds bank to examine the accounts. Discussion ensued and the Treasurer answered questions:

- The Treasurer confirmed that only one person is now auditing accounts in the County and Bridie Spinks is no longer auditing.
- Both the Membership Secretary and Treasurer are unhappy with the new systems for auditing and membership payments.
- It was suggested that we feed back to County that the new system is becoming untenable.
- The Treasurer said that the new system is not progress, only the form and copies of bank statements used to be required. Only a couple of the pages of the LOMAS report are relevant to the Branch. The only benefit is that the Treasurer does not see cash any more. The Membership Secretary agreed. All payments are by direct debit or cheque and the Club is paid via bank transfer.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

10.1 County Circular June 2015 (Distributed)

Membership Process Update attached.

10.2 Remembrance Special Circular 2015

Apply for tickets for the Festival of Remembrance and Cenotaph Ceremony.

10.3 VJ Anniversary Commemorations Sat 15th August 2015 London

Flypast and Drumhead service at 2pm followed by a Parade of Veterans down Whitehall then a reception for Veterans hosted by the Legion. Application forms for Burma Star and Pacific Star Veterans and Widows to attend event and Drumhead Service. Return by 17 July 2015.

10.4 Legion Featured in Channel 4 Documentary “Dimentiville” 4th June 2015

This includes Poppy Lodge, the specialist dementia care unit at the Galanos House Legion care home.

10.5 Kartforce May Updates – Motor racing for limbless Veterans

Upcoming races and events, news and new sponsors.

10.6 Emails on Branch Web Site

Usual special events and business courses - 99 items.

11. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER REPORT:

11.1 D Day Wreaths See also item 13.4

The Poppy Appeal Organiser handed out the wreaths on the day. Donations are awaited from Didcot ATC squadron, Chilton Scouts and the Branch. Donations from Diamond and STFC are being paid by BACS and will take more time to come through. The PAO will chase outstanding donations from the beginning of the month.

The Ceremonial Officer asked about the donation for the Branch wreath. This was discussed and the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: The Branch donates £30 to the Poppy Appeal in respect of the wreath received and laid at the D Day Service

PROPOSED: Standard Bearer SECONDED Ceremonial Officer CARRIED

11.2 County Poppy Forum

The Poppy Appeal Organiser has received an invitation to this event on 18th July at Newbury. Unfortunately she has a clashing event and cannot attend. The Assistant Poppy Appeal Organiser said that he is away and cannot attend either.

11.3 Poppy Walk Sponsor Money

The Poppy Appeal Organiser has been sent some cheques via the Club from walkers not from the Harwell area. She has contacted the County Membership Support officer for advice regarding where they should be sent.

11.4 D Day Bucket Collection

The Poppy Appeal Organiser had sent a request for help on a proposed Legion stand at the Chilton Festival to the Poppy Appeal collectors. Only one person, Hazel King, was available to help. The PAO decided not to have a stand and the Legion gazebo was sent back. The PAO asked her if she would instead wear a sash and help with the bucket collection at the service, which she agreed to do. This was fortunate as the PAO unexpectedly had to lay a wreath on behalf of her employer.

Hazel King and the Secretary handed out the service sheets provided by Duncan Rogers whilst carrying the collecting boxes and people donated as they were given the service sheets. Hazel King commented that said she enjoyed this and would do it again. The Assistant Poppy Appeal Organiser said that this was a good way of doing this.

The total collected was £89.53, a good amount considering the attendance was down on last year, and a similar amount to the feast collection. The school children were very good, there were a lot more than previous years which is good as they bring their parents. John Belton said that the whole school wanted to take part.

The Harwell Poppy Appeal total now stands at £3787.25

12. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

The Standard Bearer reported that the Standard had been paraded at the D Day Service. He and the Ceremonial Officer have not heard of any future parades.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Donation to the Poppy Appeal

The Ceremonial Officer asked if the matter of the missing £10 mentioned at the last meeting had been resolved. The Treasurer replied that it had and the full £25.10 had been paid to the Poppy Appeal.

13.2 Union Flag used Outside the Club.

The President reported that the flag the Branch flies outside the Club is now grubby and dirty. It was donated to us by a lady in Blewbury. The flag cannot be washed. Discussion ensued of suitable methods of cleaning it and the President will now ask for advice from a local dry cleaners.

13.3 Payment to Club for Refreshments

The Treasurer said that he had not yet been asked for the £50 payment for this to the Club. He has also received a cheque to the Branch that should have been paid to the club so he will write a cheque to the Club for £70.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 28th August 2015

The President thanked the Vice Chairman for stepping in to run the meeting at short notice, agreed by the whole meeting. He also thanked the Ceremonial Officer and Secretary for their organisation of the D Day Service, it went like clockwork.

There being no further business the Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 21:05 hours.