A Brief History of Minchinhampton Royal British Legion

In 1919, the Minchinhampton Church Club Trust owned the Building at 11 High Street Minchinhampton. With just 6 Members left it was decided at a meeting on 29th September 1919, to offer to let the building to the "Comrades of the Great War Club" which had been formed earlier in 1919. A nominal rent of £10 per annum was set on condition that the 6 remaining Church Club members be admitted as original members of the Comrades. This was approved at a meeting of the Comrades in September 1919. On 1st October, the agreement was signed and the Comrades moved into, 11 High Street making it the new “Comrades Club".

On 28th August 1921, the Comrades came under the auspices of the newly formed British Legion, and the Club title changed from that date. The British Legion Club was formed under the Chairmanship of the Old Comrades commandant Brigadier General W.H. Fasken

On 9th September 1924 Mr Woolacombe Boyce, one of the original 6 Church Club Members, presented to the Branch with a "Roll of Honour" Book naming all the victims of the Great War from Minchinhampton. In 1991 the Branch donated this book to the Minchinhampton Historical Society, to preserve it for posterity. It is now held by the Minchinhampton Parish Council for safe keeping.

The Club continued to flourish, winning numerous trophies and Medals for darts, table tennis, billiards and shooting; (The Club had its own Range in the Club). The Club worked with other local groups to help to promote football and cricket in the Town. The Club was also kept busy organising other social events, local concerts, dances and whist drives, up to the time of the War in 1939.

During the War, the Club was opened up to admit members of HM forces, either on leave or stationed locally. It also became the HQ of the local unit of the Home Guard. In addition The Legion operated a Welcome Home Fund for all returning servicemen of the district. In 1939 when the War started, the Club Membership stood at 106; at the end of the War it was 146.

In 1946, The Church House Trust decided to raise the rent from the nominal £10 which had remained for the 27 years since 1919 to £30. In order to raise this extra amount, the Club formed a Sub Committee to approach the landlords for either permission to apply for a Bar License, or to make an offer for the property. On reporting back, it was decided to make an offer for the premises. So an offer was made and the Premises were bought for £800. It was also agreed to open the Membership to all men over the age of 18 in the district.

On formation of the New Club, The British Legion Club would cease to exist after 25 years of operation. The New Club was called the Minchinhampton Club. However, in return for all concessions and gifts of all The British Legion Club monies, furniture, games equipment etc, certain conditions were imposed. These conditions were that The Minchinhampton Branch of the British Legion would have the right of a convenient room free of charge once a week within the Minchinhampton Club. This would be regarded as their Official Headquarters in which to conduct their business and other activities. The Minchinhampton Branch would also have the right to transfer part of these rights to the Women’s Section when formed; (the Women’s Section was formed in July 1949).

This arrangement has continued until the present time. When the Minchinhampton Club was formed it was not a condition to either be ex-service or a requirement to join The Royal British Legion. So, younger people who join the Minchinhampton Club to use the facilities have no obvious reason or incentive to also join the Royal British Legion.