

**WINCHCOMBE BRANCH  
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  
AGM**

**Chairman's Report Monday 8th October 2012**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all this evening.

**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2011**

Our Chaplains, Bishop Peter Firth and The Reverend John Partington, conducted the Remembrance Service on Sunday morning, with The Reverends Kathy Rhodes, Richard Harris and Father Peter Slocombe. The Service of Remembrance and Reconciliation and Parade were combined and it was estimated that, in all, approximately over 1700 people were present. The weather was good and twenty-five wreaths were laid.

The Pates Grammar School C.C.F. Corps and Drums were on parade. I wish to thank the O.C. Lt. Col. Nigel Woodall, and Captain Derek Salmon for bringing the C.C.F. to Winchcombe. I also wish to thank members for being on parade, and must thank the Vice Chairman Mr John Markwick for taking the parade on my behalf. I should also thank Mr John Welch for carrying out the duties of Parade Marshal, Mr Robert Davies who kindly arranged for the amplification system to be set up - a great asset to the proceedings, and Mrs June Wright for organising the Poppy Collection on the day at the Parade and, of course, in the days prior to the service.

I wish to give special thanks to Bishop Peter Firth and also to the staff at St Peter's Centre for the preparation of the instructions and to Pates for photocopying and distributing the service sheets at the Parade.

Our thanks go to Inspector S. Templeton and all the Police Constables. Yet again it was a pleasure to have the service led by St Peter's Church Choir directed by Mrs Fiona Brown accompanied by Winchcombe Concert Brass directed by Mr John Blenkinsop.

At Christ Church, Gretton, we must thank The Reverend Julia Hook for taking the service in the Church and afterwards at the War Memorial. The 11/11/11 Service was held as usual at The Cross in Winchcombe. There was an excellent turnout.

## **POPPY APPEAL**

For the Remembrance Service Poppy Appeal on 13/11/11 we raised £598.48 from the sale of poppies. for the year

In 2010/11. the total raised was £9,478.55. Seven years we ago raised £3,900, so the figure has increased tremendously, probably due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For the 90th Anniversary Poppy Appeal we have raised £6,511.86. The total is £15,990.41. We know that there are collections going on throughout the country for "Help for Heroes" which could reduce the total amount raised for this year's Poppy Appeal; however the Poppy Appeal continues to provide all the facilities and support of the seven rehabilitation homes which have been purchased by the "Help for Heroes" Fund. The Royal British Legion has pledged this support for ten years.

A concert was arranged by volunteers for "Help for Heroes" in the summer at Abbey Old House.

A Christmas Carol Evening was arranged by Mr Duncan Westerman which raised £1,401.30 for the 90th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion at the home of Squadron Leader Richard and Mrs Jean Lane. We thank them for all the arrangements, including food.

A Lent Lunch was held in the Guide Hall, actually on Gold Cup Day, never the less we made £341.

The Poppy Appeal Concert in October, arranged by Mrs June Wright and Mr Duncan Westerman, Director of the Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra, with the soloist Sue Black, was very well attended. As usual it was held at Winchcombe School. We must thank all those who organised the event, which raised £2,340.50.

It was to be our Poppy Organiser's last event, as she unexpectedly died three months later.

For this year's concert we are again having the Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra, with Sue Black, and the event will be in the form of a Tribute to Mrs June Wright.

Vehicles from the Defence Storage and Distribution Centre Ashchurch, and privately owned military vehicles were on display in the Abbey Terrace two days before Remembrance Sunday. We hope to have the same this year.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Currently we have 58 members. Sadly we have had two deaths:

1. June Wright            Poppy Appeal Organiser for 8 years.
2. Joyce Ford            Her predecessor for 40 years, and  
Secretary

Captain Shane O'Neil, the Membership Secretary, will be giving a more detailed report and I wish to thank him for his work.

There are 41 members paying by Direct Debit, and 17 by cash.

## **MOBILITY SCHEME**

There are currently no battery cars in Winchcombe. As far as we are aware, all the MPV's we see in the area are privately owned.

## **SERVICE COMMITTEE**

The Chairman, Mr Edward Lawson-Kimberley, will present the details in his report. I wish to thank Mr John Markwick very much for Chairing the Committee for twelve years and for attending Welfare cases which he and I used to do together. Mr Markwick has now "hung his boots up". I am delighted to welcome Mr Edward Lawson-Kimberley who has attended an R.B.L. two-day course on Case Workers' on welfare. I have also attended an updating course which we are required to do every two years in order to qualify as an active Welfare Officer. We have only had one case this year.

## **CHAPLAINS**

We are grateful to Bishop Peter Firth and The Reverend John Partington, and for a while Reverend Steve Ward, for acting as chaplains.

## **TREASURER**

I wish to thank, on your behalf, Mr Michael Paish for all his hard work throughout the year in maintaining our accounts.

## **SECRETARY**

I would like to thank Mr John Welch for all the time he has given to dealing with our correspondence throughout the year. He is willing to continue as Secretary. John also acts as Parade Marshal on Remembrance Sunday, for which we are grateful. I would also like to thank him for arranging our visit in May to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, which was an excellent visit and most thought-provoking.

At the beginning of August, Lady Ashcombe very kindly invited members, and the Gardening Club, to visit the gardens and part of Sudeley Castle. It was a most enjoyable occasion.

### **FUND RAISING**

Squadron Leader Richard Lane must be thanked for his efforts to raise funds for the Branch. He has kindly arranged for the printing of the Poppy Appeal Concert tickets and posters. He is obtaining prizes and organising the raffle for the concert together with Mr John and Mrs Sheila Markwick. I also wish to thank John and Sheila Markwick for running the raffle at the concert last October.

### **STANDARD BEARER**

Our thanks go to Mr Maurice Fletcher for all his help. He attended the County Rededication Service at the Cathedral, as well as going to the Cheltenham Town Hall Remembrance Service. Miss Sarah Wills, who is a Police Officer, is currently undergoing training to become a fully fledged Standard Bearer ; she will be taking part at this year's Branch Concert. I thank them both for their work.

### **SMALL BRANCH EFFICIENCY AWARD**

We unfortunately did not win but were very close to the winners for the Efficiency Award last year.

### **FINALLY**

The Welfare Chairman attended a two-day Care Welfare Course and a Branch Management Course. The Chairman attended a one-day Upgrading Welfare Course.

The Chairman also attended a County R.B.L. all-day Seminar.

Our new P.A.O. (Poppy Area Organiser), Mrs Amanda Clements-Hunt attended the County Poppy Conference.

For the record, the Chairman, Secretary and Welfare Chairman attended the County Conference in January 2012.

A Pathway in Growth is taking place and there are many changes to be made with the Regional structure of The Royal British Legion. There are to be just 3 Regions administering 16 Areas. Our new Area is to be known as the South West Midlands, and comprises the counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and the City of Bristol. We form a part of the new Midlands Region. Within the Regional structure, the intention is to set up the actual Area Offices in the larger cities such as Bristol for us, but this is still under discussion. The Area

Manager is Mr David Lowe for South West Midlands. The Gloucester Office is still active at present.

Our sincere thanks go to the Committee of the Conservative Working Men's Club for the free use of this room as our Headquarters.

Thank you all for your support over the past year. I shall be retiring as Chairman, a position I have held for about twenty years. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you and I wish my successor an enjoyable term of office and the very best of luck. Again, thank you very much.

Major Tom Hancock D.L.

8th October 2012