BRANCH SECRETARIES:
Please bring these items to your members’ attention and display this circular where your members can read it.

MEMBERSHIP

Please see the enclosed Membership Policy and Admin Newsletter.

The printed version of the new membership form (MS4) is now available from Poppy Membership at Aylesford. You can order them by email from: PoppyMembership@britishlegion.org.uk, by phone on 01622 795801 or post order to: Poppy Appeal, The Royal British Legion Village, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7NX. Please do not over order or they will run out of forms and there will not be enough to go around.

Completed forms should be sent to:
RBL Membership Applications and Payments, PO Box 1402, 9 The Lakes, Northampton NN1 9EX (this address is at the foot of the second page of the form). It is not to Novacroft’s registered office in Milton Keynes!

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION PORTAL PROJECT / OFFICE 365

The MAP is now operating and 40% of Berkshire Branches are able to access the Portal and they have been sent their email addresses and passwords which allow them to do so. Now that we have seen the Portal working, it is easier to explain its function and why it is useful for Branches to have access to it.

When you open up the Portal, it takes you to the Home Page from which you can access Current RBL News Items and useful documents such as the Membership Handbook, the Ceremonial Handbook, the Royal Charter, and Membership Forms etc. You can also access the County Area which has a Calendar and, in due course, will also hold useful documents. From this County Area you can access your own Branch Folder. In this folder you can access membership details and store useful documents such as Branch Minutes and other documents that the other members of the committee can access.

It is now clear that the Portal is useful for Branches and every Branch should have access to it. There is the capacity for 8 members of the Branch Committee to have access to the Portal and whilst this may not be practical for all Branches, every Branch Committee should have at least one member (ideally the Secretary) with access. Those Branches which have not yet signed up for access should complete the form attached with this Circular and return it to the County Office. An electronic version of the form will be sent out with the e-copy of the Circular and if you are able to complete this copy rather than the hard copy it will save time in the County Office. Only the titles listed can be used for the email address, please do not amend.

The Branches already registered are:
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

A letter has just been sent out to all cash paying members explaining the membership renewal process. The Membership Department expected the letter to have been sent when they arranged for the article in the Legion Magazine but it was held up and apologise for the delay and any confusion caused. There will be two variations of the letter, one for Direct Debit (DD) Payers and one for Cash Payers:

- The Cash payers’ letter will explain that they are no longer to pay their renewal fees to the Branch and that they should now complete a (attached) form to indicate their preferred method of renewing. A prepaid envelope will be provided for the member to return their completed form. Due to the potential volume of responses and the process in place for capturing the data when the completed forms arrive at Novacroft, members must reply to the letter rather than phoning or emailing their response, this will also help to speed up the processing time.

Branches can help by encouraging all their current cash paying members to complete and return the preferred payment method form ASAP to ensure we capture their preferred payment before renewal, this will then enable us to send out this year’s renewal letters tailored to members payment choice. For example if a member would like to continue to pay by cash they should tick the box for PayPoint, a barcode will then be included in the renewal letter which the member (or branch official) can take to their local store that has PayPoint, the barcode will be scanned and the member (or branch official) pays cash for their membership renewal.

Please note branches are no longer responsible for collecting membership fees but they can still assist members with getting their payment to the RBL payments team where required.

Attached is a draft version of the payment preference letter that has gone out today, please note this is not quite the final version but it will give you a good idea of what members will be receiving, it should not be disseminated to members as it is not the final version, it is just for your Branch’s reference.

- The letter to DD paying members due to go out w/c 6 July is to inform the member that from this renewal Novacroft will be collecting DD payments on behalf of the RBL. The member needs to take no action as the initial concern that DD members would have to complete a new mandate has proved to be incorrect and there is absolutely no requirement to do this.

ALBERT HALL FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE 7 NOVEMBER 2015

The Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall will be held on Saturday 7 November. There will be performances at 2pm and 7pm. Tickets for the afternoon performance for members of the Legion and the Women’s Section will be available from early July either by phone, online, in person or by post. To book, please call the Royal Albert Hall Box Office on 029 7589 8212 or to book online visit www.royalalberthall.com. Early booking is recommended.

For tickets to the evening performance Members should apply to their Branch Secretary. No more than 2 tickets which will be issued on the understanding that they are for the members and a close family member or carer (previously worded as spouse).

Branches can bid for a maximum of four tickets for the evening performance and should complete the enclosed application and enclose payment for the tickets requested, to be sent to the MSO at RBL County Office by 7 August 2015. Tickets are £10.00 each.

Standard Bearers, a separate application is enclosed for Standard Bearers to apply to parade at the Festival. The timescale is very tight and applications need to be returned to the MSO at County Office by 17 July. The county is expecting to have just one place allocated to it.
CENOTAPH CEREMONY

The Cenotaph Ceremony takes place on Sunday 8 November. If you have members who would like to attend please complete the enclosed application form. Completed forms must be returned to the County Office no later than Tuesday 7 August 2015.

Those taking part in the ex-Service element of the Ceremony must have served in HM Armed Forces or be War Widows/Widowers. If any of your members require a carer for the day (one carer per participant) they must also be in possession of a ticket.

Non ex-Service members may apply for tickets to march in the civilian contingent. Please make it clear on the application form what contingent the tickets are for (ex-Service or civilian).

Please be aware of the physical demands of the Ceremony which involves standing in Whitehall for at least one hour and then marching for a distance of at least 1 mile, possibly in inclement weather.

FAR EAST WW2 VETERANS CASE STUDY REQUEST.

A request has come in from the publicity team for us to identify any members, beneficiaries and volunteers who served in the Far East during WW2.

All that is required at this point is a name and contact number for anyone who served in the Far East in WW2 and would be willing to have a quick chat with our regional PR officer.

Please forward any such contact directly to our PR Officer Bethan Herbert email; bherbert@britishlegion.org.uk.

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION TO LEAD 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF VJ DAY COMMEMORATIONS

The Ministry of Defence in collaboration with The Royal British Legion will lead national commemorations this summer to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Victory over Japan Day, taking place on Saturday 15 August 2015 in central London.

Personnel from all three Services will provide ceremonial support to the commemorations, known as ‘VJ Day 70’, and will assist veterans of the Far East campaign, former Prisoners of War, civilian internees, and their families as they mark this historic anniversary commemorating the end of the war in the Pacific.

The anniversary aims to pay tribute to all those who served in the Armed Forces, including those who served in the famous 14th Army in Burma, who helped secure victory. Prisoners of War and civilian internees from the conflict will also be recognised.
**70th anniversary in London**

In London, the following national events will take place with members of the public invited to observe the service and parade:

- **2 pm** – a flypast and traditional Drumhead Service on Horse Guards Parade attended by senior political and military representatives from the UK and her Allies, veterans (military and civilian) and their families.

- Followed by current members of the Armed Forces leading veterans and their families in a VJ Parade down Whitehall.

- A 70th anniversary reception for veterans and their families, hosted by the Legion.

Burma Star and Pacific Star recipients and their widows are invited to apply for accreditation to attend all three events.

Direct descendants of Burma Star and Pacific Star veterans who are unable to attend, or no longer living, are invited to represent them at the Drumhead Service.

**VJ Day veterans & families**
The Legion is sending invitations to all major Service associations including the Burma Star Association.

Copies of the forms are enclosed and downloadable versions of the forms are also available from the links below.

- Application for VE Day 70 Event Accreditation – Burma Star & Pacific Star Veterans and Widows.
- Application for Accreditation to attend Drumhead Service Horse Guards Parade – direct descendants of Burma Star and Pacific Star holders.

Completed forms can be emailed to VJDay70@britishlegion.org.uk or posted to:

VJ Day 70 Events Team
The Royal British Legion
199 Borough High Street
London SE1 1AA.

**Applications are due by no later than 17 July 2015.**

Funding support is available to enable veterans and their guests to attend the commemorations. Further details on how to claim for travel expenses will be announced shortly.

**Other 70th anniversary events**
A number of VJ Day commemorations will also be held around the UK, including a commemoration service at St-Martins-in-the-Fields Church organised by the National Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOW) and a service in the Millennium Chapel followed by a wreath laying at the Legion’s National Memorial Arboretum organised by The Malayan Volunteers Group. See the Legion’s [VJ Day website](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/vjd2015) for further details.

Further information is available from the [Legion’s VJ Day page](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/vjd2015) and the [Government’s VJ Day website](http://www.gov.uk/vjd2015).

For all enquiries regarding the upcoming VJ Day commemorations please email VJDay70@britishlegion.org.uk
INVITATIONS TO NATIONAL OFFICERS

The purpose of this communication is to reiterate the policy in regard to invitations to the National Officers to attend County/District and Branch events.

When considering inviting a National Officer to a County/District or Branch event, please contact the Secretary to the National Officers (Andrea Forder) in writing (requests by telephone will not be accepted) in the first instance. To avoid disappointment, this is best done at the initial planning stage. Andrea will then ascertain if the National Officer whom you wish to invite is available and annotate their diary accordingly. Please do not invite more than one National Officer to an event, and please do not contact the National Officers direct with an invitation. We need to ensure a wholly co-ordinated approach to their engagements. Should you wish the National Standard to be paraded because a National Officer will be present, please include this in your request to Andrea.

Andrea Forder
Secretary to National Officers
199 Borough High Street
London SE1 1AA

ROYAL CHARTER

The Royal Chart has been amended following National Conference. The new version (No. 10 dated 30 June 2015) and a summary of the changes are available on the MAP and the RBL website. The summary of changes is also enclosed.

BRANCH ACCOUNTS

Your Treasurer will have received the end of year accounts package last week. Electronic versions are available from the MSO (Jennifer Strange) should you wish them.

Please remind your Treasurer that Branch Accounts together with supporting Bank Statements and a Letter of “Authority to Disclose Information” (for each account) must be submitted to the MSO at the County Office by 30 September.

As mentioned before we have an extreme shortage of Legion Independent Examiners and just have Rosemary Edgington who is qualified to examine accounts and has limited capacity. Rosemary can be contacted by email only on: raedgington12@gmail.com or if you do not have email please ring Jennifer Strange, Membership Support Officer (MSO) at the County Office 0118 9762362 to get a message to Rosemary.

We regret that if you are not able to book the examination with Rosemary you will need to find a local person who can examine the accounts. The criterion for examination is in the Guide to Branch Accounts.

BRANCH MEMBERSHIP FEES

Head Office took the annual membership fee twice from the Branches listed below. The National Chairman has sent a personal letter of apology to these Branches together with his assurance that the money will be repaid into the Branch bank account by the end of June.

Berkshire Datchet Mortimer Sonning
Steventon Tadley Wargrave Windsor

LIVE ON PRESENTATION

If your Branch would like an electronic copy of the General “Live On” Presentation suitable for external audiences, complete with speakers notes, please contact the Jennifer Strange (MSO) Support Officer. Please note the file size is 6.2mb and in PowerPoint 2010.
**BRANCH WELFARE**

The next monthly return for June is due by Monday 6 July

I am pleased to advise that from July the Visitor returns will be changed to a quarterly basis so the next return after the June report will be required by 5 October for the period July/August/September.

Please see the item in the Membership Policy & Admin Newsletter regarding the Branch Welfare Project.

**COUNTY FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE 31 OCTOBER**

As mentioned last month, the County Festival of Remembrance will be on Saturday 31 October but due to change of ownership and refurbishment the theatre at Bearwood College is not available. The County FoR Committee believe they have found a suitable alternative venue close to Bearwood College and are in the process of finalising the booking. The details will be sent out as soon as possible.

**RUN FOR THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

We have managed to secure a number of charity places in the **Windsor Half Marathon on Sunday 27th September 2015**. The race takes place close to Windsor Castle within the confines of the Windsor Great Park. The course is two laps, one of approximately 4 miles, the other of about 7.5 miles with the remainder made up by the 1.5 mile Long Walk at the start and end of the race. [www.runwindsor.com](http://www.runwindsor.com)

If you know of anyone who would like to take part, please contact Annie or Sam. Monies raised in sponsorship will be allocated to the relevant PAO district.

**POPPY PICNICS**

Poppy Picnic is a community run event supported by CFRs nationwide and the Legion’s central office. The proposition is to hold a picnic, invite friends and family and raise money for the Royal British Legion. Just decide where and when to picnic, and then invite people along.

Before anyone tucks in, make sure they donate £3 each – you can include a free drink or tasty treat. Then ask for contributions to food, games and any fun you organise on the day.

When you register (online) we'll send you a free picnic pack which includes invitations, posters, stickers, picnic bingo cards and more. [http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/poppy-picnic](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/poppy-picnic)

Remember to let all your friends and family know about your Poppy Picnic – Facebook and Twitter are also great ways to spread the news.

Keep an eye on our updates at Poppy Legion on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com) or [Twitter (@PoppyLegion)](http://www.twitter.com) and don’t forget to use #poppypicnic.

For additional fundraising materials please email your request to poppypicnic@britishlegion.org.uk and include your postal address.

For further information please contact your Community Fundraiser, Anne-Marie or Sam.

**COUNTY POPPY LAUNCH AND ARMED FORCES RACEDAY 24 OCTOBER**

The date for this year’s County launch is Saturday 24th October. Once again Newbury Racecourse is supporting the Berkshire Poppy Launch with an Armed Forces Race day. There will be military theme to the day, a guest of honour to launch the appeal & complimentary tickets for the race day for RBL members and Military personnel.
AROUND THE EDGE WALK

This year’s “Around the Edge” sponsored walk over two days and can be walked on either date, **Saturday 26 or Sunday 27th September**. If you know of any keen (or even not-so-keen) walkers in your Branch or area who would be willing to walk a section of this route, please ask them to consider this. Walkers would not have to be RBL members – they might be cadets, scouts, members of a rambling group or just acquaintances who happen to enjoy a walk. Each group of walkers would be sent a sponsorship form (which can be photocopied as often as necessary) and a map of the route plus basic instructions. A letter is enclosed and please contact either of the Community Fundraisers, Annie or Sam to register for the walk.

FACEBOOK

Berkshire & The Vale Poppy Appeal has a Facebook page:  
https://www.facebook.com/berkshire.poppyappeal

Please forward any fundraising activities that you are aware of to either of the CFR’s (Ann-Marie or Sam) and they will publicise them on the site.

BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST 2015

Please be advised that the following Royal British Legion personnel, or those with a Legion connection, are recognised in the Birthday Honours List 2015:

**Order of the British Empire (OBE)**
Timothy Fraser Marshall – Producer, Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance. For services to Service and ex-Service Personnel.

**Order of the British Empire (MBE)**
Benjamin Charles Petre Hancock – Founder, London Poppy Day. For voluntary service to The Royal British Legion.

Heather Ogburn - Founder, HMS Heroes. For services to Education.

**British Empire Medal (BEM)**
Edward Watkin Evans – Poppy Appeal Organiser, North Wales. For voluntary service to The Royal British Legion.

POPPIES IN THE WIND CD

Frank Dooley (original member of The Dooleys and Director of The Mobility Bureau) has composed and co-produced a CD of ballads about the First World in which Frank plays on all tracks. The album pays tribute to: the first volunteers; letters from the trenches; Christmas 1914; the army medics; the first pilots; Menin Gate and the war graves; the horses; the women behind the men; an old soldier's VC; and the poppies. The music is a mixture of fast and slow ballads. Mr Dooley will be giving a quarter of the sales proceeds to the RBL.

The Poppies In The Wind CD costs £7.90 and the ITunes link is:  

VETERAN OF NORTH ATLANTIC & D DAY LANDINGS CELEBRATES HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY IN WARGRAVE

John Hitchens, a member of Wargrave Branch celebrated his 100th Birthday on 30 May. John was called up in 1939 and served in the Royal Navy where he initially served on mine sweepers. On D-Day he was petty officer on a Patrol ship leading an American cruiser to the D-Day offshore landing area. Very near to the end of the war John’s ship was commanded to rescue American prisoners of war from the Channel Islands. In 1950 John emmigrated with his wife to America so she could be near her sister. John set up a successful hairdressing business, his trade before the war, which he then sold after 25 years and became a consultant, eventually retiring when he was
eight-five. John returned to England just after the millennium to live in Wargrave where he soon joined the Wargrave Branch.

**CIRCULAR – HARD COPIES**

Please let Jennifer Strange (MSO) know if you have an email address and no longer require a hard copy of the circular to help reduce the office postage costs.

**DEADLINES IN CIRCULAR:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 July</td>
<td>VJ Events in London, applications to attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 July</td>
<td>Standard Bearer to apply to parade at Albert Hall Festival of Remembrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 August</td>
<td>Branch application for tickets to Albert Hall Festival of Remembrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 August</td>
<td>Application to attend Cenotaph Service &amp; Parade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Branch Enclosures**

Festival of Remembrance Evening Performance ticket application
Festival of Remembrance Standard Bearer letter & application
Cenotaph Ceremony application
Membership Policy & Admin Newsletter
Membership Administration Portal reply slip
Summary of changes to Royal Charter
Resolutions - Actions taken booklet
VJ Application for London events, 2 versions
Around the Edge Walk

**Membership Support Officer:**
Jennifer Strange  
T: 0118 9762362  
E: jstrange@britishlegion.org.uk

**Welfare**
Rodger Cartwright, Case Officer  
Ann Bethell, Advice & Information Officer  
Victoria Gornall-King, Advice & Information Officer  
T: 0808 8028080  
E: Southeastmidlands@britishlegion.org.uk  
Knowledge base: http://support.britishlegion.org.uk/

**Community Fundraisers:** (Tues, Wed & Thurs)
Anne-Marie Duffin  
E: aduffin@britishlegion.org.uk  
T: 07776 227768

Samantha Hickton  
E: shickton@britishlegion.org.uk  
T: 07802 801663

**Regional Clubs Relationship Manager, Midlands**
Pauline Swann,  
T: 07970 375421  
E: pswann@britishlegion.org.uk
2015 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>VJ Day 70th Anniversary</td>
<td>London &amp; Nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Maidenhead VJ Service</td>
<td>All Saints Church, Boyn Hill Road, Maidenhead. 11.00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>26/27</td>
<td>Around the Edge Walk</td>
<td>County Boundary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Windsor Half Marathon</td>
<td>Windsor Great Park</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>County Standard Bearers Competition</td>
<td>Hungerford Town Hall 10am</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>County Poppy Launch and Armed Forces Raceday</td>
<td>Newbury Racecourse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>County Festival of Remembrance</td>
<td>Venue to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Festival of Remembrance</td>
<td>Albert Hall, London</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Remembrance Sunday</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Salvation Army Festival of Remembrance</td>
<td>Salvation Army, Anstey Road, Reading. 6.15pm</td>
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Standard Bearer Drill Sessions are on the following page
STANDARD BEARER DRILL SESSIONS

Standard Bearer Practices will be held on the following dates at Tilehurst RBL Club, Downing Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 5BB:

- 12 July
- 26 July
- 9 August
- 23 August
- 6 September
- 20 September
- 4 October

All practices will start at 10.15am and are open to all Standard Bearers in the County regardless of experience. These sessions are there to help Standard Bearers and it is not a requirement to attend all sessions.

Please note that practice sessions on rare occasions may be liable to cancellation due to parades and hall availability. If you are not a regular attendee then you may wish to telephone to check the drill has not been cancelled.

Regards

Philip Shaw
County Ceremonial Officer
Tel. 01628 637044