Hi All,

I hope you are all enjoying the summer weather we are having! I believe that summer was booked for the 20th of July this year, so make the most of it!

Your Secretary and I attended a Branch Management Course earlier this year, to further our knowledge so that we can better run the Branch. There were some very good ideas for recruiting and fundraising and I hope that we can implement some in the months to come. However, do not forget that we need YOU to recruit new members too, so spread the word and get your friends and family to join The Legion. We are the custodians of Remembrance and support serving and past members of the Forces through our welfare work and we need all the help and support we can get.

Our Membership Secretary, Phil, has asked me to pass on that he hopes that you have all now finally received your Membership Cards from London. If you haven’t he assures us that they will arrive. We can only apologise on behalf of London for what has been a less than smooth transition to the new Membership process! We look forward to a marked improvement next year!

The 2016 Liberation of Antwerp Tank Ceremony is nearly upon us so please see inside for details and to book for the reception & lunch afterwards. Also note that this years AGM will be on the same day as the Poppy Appeal Lunch, so no excuses for not coming! Details will follow.

TTFN,
Sid
Chairman and Newsletter Editor.

Got some pictures or an article about The Legion that you would like published? You can send any submissions to: sid-wilkins@hotmail.com

RBL Antwerp Branch HELP LINE: 0468 359 792
Mary Ann Marinus.
If someone is ill, or needs a visit, please DO call.
Diary Dates 2016

The following list is compiled from information received from each association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Jul</td>
<td></td>
<td>ABCA</td>
<td>BBQ</td>
<td>Sea scouts Linkeroover</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abca-antwerp.be">www.abca-antwerp.be</a></td>
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<td>31 Aug</td>
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<td>ABCA</td>
<td>Mussels Lunch</td>
<td>de Bomma</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abca-antwerp.be">www.abca-antwerp.be</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Sep</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liberation of Boom</td>
<td>Klein Willebroeck</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Sep</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>TRBL</td>
<td>Tank Ceremony</td>
<td>Cromwell Tank</td>
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<td>4 Sep</td>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>TRBL</td>
<td>Tank Lunch</td>
<td>Colmar, Antwerp</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Oct</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>TRBL</td>
<td>Poppy Lunch &amp; AGM</td>
<td>Basiliek Hotel, Edegem</td>
<td>AGM then Lunch</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Nov</td>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>TRBL</td>
<td>Poppy Collection</td>
<td>Meir, Antwerp</td>
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<td>13 Nov</td>
<td>18:30</td>
<td>TRBL/ABCA</td>
<td>Remembrance Service</td>
<td>St Boniface Church</td>
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<td>11 Nov</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Remembrance Services</td>
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Please note the corrected dates for the Remembrance Church Service at St Boniface and the AGM/Poppy Lunch. Details for the Tank Ceremony are contained in this Newsletter.

Note: Although we have tried to do our best with accuracy, things do change. So please check with the relevant association in case of amendments. We will post any updates in future Newsletters of course. Do you know of an event that our members might be interested in? Drop a line to the Editor with details and he will try to include it.

Liberation of Antwerp - Tank Ceremony 2016

Location
Jan Van Rijswijcklaan opposite the Expo Building. If at all possible, we strongly recommend that you use public transport to get there. Trams 2 and 6 or Bus 22 stop at the location.

Timing
All members to be seated by 09:50 on Sunday 4 Sep 16.

Parking
Parking is available in the car park next to the Tank Location. Access is from the Camile Huysmanslaan, turn into the Jan Baptist Verlooystraat and then into the Eric Sasselaan, as per the map below.

Continued on next page…
Parking is free – however, all cars must be removed by 12:00 hours on 4 Sep 16. If you wish to park here, you will require a parking permit. These are obtainable through Sid Wilkins or Bob Chambers (contacts below & on last page of the newsletter).

**Reception**
There will be a reception and Lunch held at the Colmar Restaurant (Gerard le Grellelaan 2, 2018 Antwerpen), which is approximately 500 meters from the Tank. Details for booking are below.

Chairman: Sid Wilkins, e-mail: sid-wilkins@hotmail.com
President: Bob Chambers, e-mail Bchambers29@msn.com

**LIMITED NUMBERS. THIS IS ON A STRICTLY FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS. SO BOOK NOW!**

**When?** Sunday 4th September 2016
**What time?** 12h30
**Where?** Colmar at Wezemberg
Places are very limited

**What's on the menu?**
Reception - Wine, water or fruit juice plus nibbles
Soup of the Day
Cold Buffet (meat, fish, vegetable buffet - all you can eat) with chips, jacket potato
Desert Buffet (all you can eat)
Beer, Wine, water, soft drinks
Coffee/Tea

**How much?** € 34 for Lunch and reception

**How do you pay?** Transfer your money to:
PNB Paribas Fortis, Meir.
RBL Bank Account Number is 220-002-0212-72
BIC: GEBABEBB IBAN: BE38 2200 0202 1272
Payment details: Name + number people + €

**For information**
Call Steve Cook 03/233 42 51 Raf Kloeck 03/664 72 85 Martin Southam 03/295 00 76
E-mail martin.southam1@skynet.be

Reservations and payments must be made by 26 August 2016
In Memoriam

It is our sad duty to inform you that our member, John Culshaw passed away on the 22nd of March. Our thoughts our with John’s friends and family.

John CULSHAW

echtgenoot van

Romy MERCKX

Geboren te Wokingham (GB) op 14 april 1942
en thuis te Aarschot overleden op 22 maart 2016.

De afscheidsplechtigheid rond de asurne, waartoe wij u vriendelijk uitnodigen, zal plaatsvinden op
zaterdag 26 maart 2016 om 11.30 uur in de aula
van het crematorium Hofheide, Jennekenstraat 5
te Nieuwrode, gevolgd door de crematie.

Nadien krijgt zijn asurne een plaats
binnen de geborgenheid van het gezin.

Samenkomst in de hal van het crematorium vanaf 11.15 uur.

Een laatste groet aan John kan gebracht worden op
vrijdag 25 maart 2016 van 19 tot 19.30 uur in
het funerarium Geert Andries, Elisabethlaan 15 te Aarschot.

Hij leeft verder in het hart en de herinneringen van:

Romy Merckx,

Sonya Culshaw,

Chloe, Joshua,

Andy Claeskens en Ilse Caudrun,

Casper, Matthias, Anke,

zijn echtgenote,

zijn kinderen en kleinkinderen.

Delen mee in dit verdriet:

zijn broer Steve, schoonzussen Christiane, Claudine

en Yvonne, neven en nichten.

De families:

CULSHAW - BEETON en MERCKX - COENEN.

Mat dank aan de thuisverpleegkundigen en aan de
medewerkers van Panal voor de steun en goede zorgen.

Ruwadres:

Gasthuisstraat 69A
3200 Aarschot

Uitvaartverzorging Geert Andries - 016 56 66 26 - www.agb.be
Things To Do

Dendermonde and Aalst. By Sid Wilkins

I recently visited Dendermonde and Aalst to see what the effects of the First World War were on these two beautiful cities. Both were devastated and there was fierce fighting both in and around both cities due to their locations on the Germany advance towards France.

Dendermonde occupied a strategic position between Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp. Refugees from across Belgium flocked to the city as they were trying to escape German brutalities. As Dendermonde was situated more to the west, the city was only reached by German troops on Friday 4 September. Rumour about German atrocities in Visé, Dinant, Namur, Taines, Aarschot, Tienen and Leuven spread quickly as refugees reached the city in the final weeks of August. The troops of General Max von Böhn mostly focused on destroying the city through fire. Arguing that German troops had been shot at by local residents, hundreds of buildings were set on fire. The blaze was enormous. When the Germans left the city on 8 September, an estimated 1,200 houses and public buildings had been gutted while almost 1,000 had sustained heavy damage. There were also random executions of civilians while others were taken hostage.

Aalst was also hit heavily by the Germans and the locals were treated brutally by the occupiers. Fierce fighting occurred at the bridges over the Dender and then within the city. Although the city did not suffer quite as badly as Dendermonde, it was still hit very hard. It is hard to believe what happened here when you consider that most people simply associate the city with Carnival. I strongly recommend a visit to the small Great War exhibition in the city museum.

This photo shows a “staged” defence of Aalst (this was because the film-crew arrived too late to film the actual defence!)

I would suggest that you need a day in each city for each tour. You could do both in one day but I would not recommend it, as there is so much to see. There are of course superb places to eat and drink during your visits to both cities.

The Dendermonde route is approximately 4,2 km long and the Aalst route is approximately 5 km. Both routes have information signs along them and the Tourist Information offices in both cities have very informative walking and cycling guides available for free.

There is a great smartphone app available that you can use during your tours. It gives you personal stories and photos from the people who lived through those terrible times and additional information on the various stops along the routes.
http://www.scheldeland.be/nl/pagina/groote-oorlog
Information for the walking routes:
http://www.scheldeland.be/nl/pagina/wandelroutes
There are also long cycling routes available, details can be found here:
http://www.scheldeland.be/nl/pagina/fietsroutes
TRBL Antwerp - Vacancies

Welfare Caseworkers

We need Caseworkers, who report directly to the Welfare Chairman. These people need an outgoing nature and a willingness to help others. Tasks include home and hospital visits, perhaps a bit of shopping for a veteran or spouse. You will also be required to attend a Legion Welfare course and to take on case-files as needed – this might be the repatriation of a veteran to the UK for example. You do not need to be a member of The Legion to be a Caseworker. Interested? Contact Mary Ann Marinus: 0486 646941 (evenings) maryann.marinus@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor

We are still seeking a new Newsletter Editor. Due to taking over as the Branch Chairman, it is not possible for Sid to carry on with the Newsletter as well. The Newsletter is sent out every 2 months or so and we need someone to take it over. The applicant will need to select and prioritise content, produce the newsletter, have it printed and distribute it (both electronically and by normal post). Please contact the current Newsletter Editor if you think this is right up your street! 0478 990214 or sid-wilkins@hotmail.com

Hofstade Memorial

There are many war memorials in Belgium, but one which may not be very well known is the memorial in Bloso Domein Hofstade which marks the shooting down of two bombers during WWII, one in Hofstade, the other in Zemst. One was RAF, a Mitchel B25 the other RAAF, a Halifax. All crewmembers died. In 2005 a memorial was erected to commemorate these two events.

On 17 April 2016, together with Bruno Hazenbosch, I laid a wreath on behalf of the TRBL and gave the Exhortation. Some 50 people were present including the Mayor of Zemst and serving and retired members of the Belgian Army and Air Force.

A piper played during the commemoration and Last Post, Reveille and the British, Australian and Belgian National Anthems were also played. It was a very moving ceremony and demonstrates how the Belgian people still remember the price that was paid during the war.

“We Will Remember Them”.

Phil Shaw, Membership Member.
Poppy Shop

Our Branch Poppy Shop has been running for some years now. We usually try to set up during the main lunches of the year. We get our goods from The Royal British Legion Poppy Shop or from local sources. You can visit the Poppy Shop at http://www.poppyshop.org.uk if you wish us to get you something, please let us know. You will of course need to pay postage as well, so please bear that in mind. Contact Steve Cook at: steveandsuzy@skynet.be.

TRBL Website

Visit The Royal British Legion Website at http://www.britishlegion.org.uk

For more information about who we are and what we do. There are also many interesting articles to read. For example, the recent football shirt auction that raised over £100,000 and Afghanistan tribute service at St Paul’s. There are also many more stories regarding the on-going First World War Centenary.

Have you paid your Membership?
Do you wish to join the Branch? Contact the Membership Secretary now.

RBL Bank Account number is 220-0020212-72 (BIC: GEBABEBB, IBAN: BE38 2200 0202 1272)
Annual subscription: €26.
Donations towards our benevolent work are welcome.

Do you have an e-mail address?

You will receive your Newsletter quicker by e-mail and will also receive any last minute notifications. Send your e-mail to the editor to get this newsletter by e-mail in the future and save TRBL both paper and postage costs.

Have you attended a ceremony on behalf of the Branch? Please feel free to submit items for inclusion in the newsletter, such as poems you particularly like, anecdotes, stories about TRBL Antwerp, comments or suggestions. Send to sid-wilkins@hotmail.com

Advertising rates

1/8 page: €6.50 per issue
1/4 page: €11 per issue
1/2 page: €16.50 per issue
Full page: €30 per issue

Contact the Newsletter Editor for more information or to place an ad.
Final Farewell

On the 20th of April 2016 a funeral service was held at the Ieper Town Cemetery Extension for 6 members of The Royal Field Artillery who were killed in action during The Great War. One of our Standard Bearers, Frans Frison was in attendance.

The Six British soldiers were given full military burials more than a century after they were killed while fighting in the First World War. Two of the men were identified as Gunners Joseph William Rowbottom and Albert William Venus, both of the 2nd Northumbrian Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery (RFA). The pair died in action, aged just 27 and 22 respectively, on May 24, 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres in Belgium.

Ministry of Defence (MOD) researchers have been unable to identify the four other men. Their remains, along with shoulder titles from the North and East Riding Batteries of the RFA, were uncovered in the small Belgian town after excavations began on a new housing estate in April 2013. Their bodies were reinterred, in coffins draped with the Union flag, at Ypres Town Cemetery today as relatives of Gunners Rowbottom and Venus looked on in sombre silence.

Gunner Rowbottom, from Wrawby, in north Lincolnshire, had been a milkman before the war and was nicknamed Milky Joe in the local press. He reported for an Army medical examination in August 1914 within three days of the outbreak of war – passing even though his vision was recorded as 'indifferent' because of a defective left eye.

Little more than a month after joining the North Riding Battery, he volunteered to serve overseas and was among the first line of Northumbrian Brigade Batteries to fight in France and Flanders.

Gunner Venus, from Hull, enlisted in the 2nd Northumbrian Brigade in December 1914 and joined the first line Hull Batteries to complete his training as a Gunner. He was killed in action with the Scarborough and Whitby North Riding Battery but, as a 'pool' Gunner, was badged as an East Riding Battery soldier.

Referring to a picture of Gunner Venus, RFA Chaplain Reverend Richard Hall said: 'His face staring out at us with confidence, at ease in his uniform, untroubled by what lay in front of him and his friends – that photo of Albert Venus is one of countless taken of men like him, like Joseph Rowbottom and their four unknown comrades placed on mantelpieces and bedside tables. 'For them as for so many of others, those photos would be joined after the Great War by bronze memorial plaques known as the dead man's penny.' He said the occasion was to 'see the names Joseph Rowbottom and Albert Venus are not forgotten'.
May 4 and May 5 are two very important days in The Netherlands: Remembrance Day and Liberation Day. The entire nation participates in a two-minute period of silence on 4 May at 20:00 in remembrance of all Dutch citizens and members of the armed forces who lost their lives in World War II and in remembrance of all Dutch nationals who have lost their lives since that time in other wars and peacekeeping missions.

Germany occupied the Netherlands on 10 May 1940. The number of people still alive who lived through the war has obviously declined. By 2000, they formed no more than 20 percent of the population. Yet memories of that darkest period of our history live on.

It took almost a year for Allied forces to liberate all the territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, from September 1944 until 15 August 1945, the date on which Japan capitulated and freedom was restored to the Dutch East Indies (now the Republic of Indonesia). Hence, different parts of the country celebrate their liberation at different times of the year. But on 4 and 5 May, the entire country unites to observe a day of remembrance followed by a day of celebration.

The Dutch observe 4 May as a day of commemoration and contemplation, and 5 May as a celebration of freedom. The two are inextricably linked.

Remembrance Day (4 May)

Since the end of the Second World War, the Dutch have observed 4 May as a day of reflection, a day to honour the victims of war. At eight o’clock in the evening the country unites in commemorating the civilians and members of the armed forces who lost their lives in the Second World War. Unlike most countries, the Netherlands does not mark the occasion with large military parades. People all over the country gather at war memorials in their own communities, and at the stroke of eight the entire country observes a two-minute silence. All these events are broadcast live on television and radio.

A national ceremony is held in Amsterdam, with a memorial service in the historic Nieuwe Kerk in Dam Square, followed by the laying of wreaths at the foot of the national war memorial. The ceremony is attended by His Majesty the King, members of parliament and people from more than 100 organisations representing the different groups in society who were affected by the war. After the two-minute silence wreaths are laid at the foot of the national monument in Dam Square. The ceremony is broadcast live on television so that millions of people all over the country can take part in the solemnities.
Liberation Day (5 May)
The close of the Remembrance Day ceremony signals the start of Liberation Day festivities commemorating Germany’s capitulation on 5 May 1945. War veterans gather in Wageningen, where the historic documents were signed, and parade through the city in celebration of the anniversary of liberty regained. 5 May is a national holiday. The solemnity of Remembrance Day gives way to joyful celebration.

“Freedom cannot be taken for granted”
Special Liberation Day events are organised all over the country. Two highlights of the day are the official launch of the celebrations – held in a different part of the country each year – and the open-air concert to mark their conclusion. Traditionally held on the Amstel River in Amsterdam and broadcast live on television, the concert takes place in the presence of His Majesty the King and members of the government.

Many local authorities organise special events for their own communities, and thirteen liberation festivals are held in different regions of the country. These liberation festivals feature both Dutch and international artists, and are especially popular with the young. The Liberation Day events centre on a different theme each year. Civil rights was an important theme at the beginning of the 1990s. In the second half of the decade, emphasis was placed on the precept that freedom cannot be taken for granted: it must be cherished and guarded with vigilance. All those involved in the festivals – organisers and performers alike – highlight these themes.

Once again the Antwerp Branch had many members in attendance at this most prestigious of occasions.

Rob, Jos, Frans, Jean and Valerie attended as our official team of Parade Marshals and Standard Bearers.
## Committee Contacts 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Bob Chambers</td>
<td>Oude Beurs 33, 2000 Antwerpen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bchambers29@msn.com">bchambers29@msn.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chairman</td>
<td>Rob Boyle</td>
<td>Lodewijk Van Berckenlaan 192/6, 2140 Borgerhout</td>
<td>03 295 89 03 (evenings)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robert.boyle@telenet.be">robert.boyle@telenet.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Secretary</td>
<td>Valerie Mott</td>
<td>Leiebos 31/172, B-2170 Merksem, Belgium</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mott_valerie@yahoo.com">mott_valerie@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Treasurer</td>
<td>Frank Van Nunen</td>
<td>Floris Primslei 22, 2150 Borsbeek</td>
<td>03 324 66 85 (office hours only)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frank@vannunen.be">frank@vannunen.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Secretary</td>
<td>Phil Shaw</td>
<td>Ridder Dessainlaan 40, 2800 Mechelen</td>
<td>0486 189 734</td>
<td><a href="mailto:philshaw@telenet.be">philshaw@telenet.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment Committee</td>
<td>Steve Cook</td>
<td>Dambruggestraat 85, 2060 Antwerpen</td>
<td>03 233 4251</td>
<td><a href="mailto:steveandsuzy@skynet.be">steveandsuzy@skynet.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Sid Wilkins</td>
<td>Van Peborghle 11, 2640 Mortsel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sid-wilkins@hotmail.com">sid-wilkins@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poppy Organiser</td>
<td>Lynne Marinus</td>
<td>Voetboogstraat 12, 2180 Ekeren</td>
<td>0495 188 089 (after 18.00h)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lynnemarinus@gmail.com">lynnemarinus@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman Welfare Committee</td>
<td>Mary Ann Marinus</td>
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<td>0468 259 792</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maryann.marinus@hotmail.com">maryann.marinus@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman Entertainment Committee</td>
<td>Martin Southam</td>
<td>Klein Heiken 11, 2950 Kapellen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:martin.southam1@skynet.be">martin.southam1@skynet.be</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment Committee</td>
<td>Raf Kloeck</td>
<td>Te Boelaarlei 103/bus 2, 2140 Borgerhout</td>
<td>03 664 72 85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Chaplain</td>
<td>Reverend Brian Millson</td>
<td>The Mission To Seafarers</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Brian.millson@mtsmail.org">Brian.millson@mtsmail.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### TRBL ANTWERP OPEN EVENING

**WHEN?** Every first Thursday of the month  
**WHERE?** Café Highlander, Stadswaag 21, Antwerp  
Come along and say hello, we look forward to seeing you.