



Royal British Legion Wymondham Branch

Winter Newsletter 2020



Exhortation: Please remember the following members and friends who have passed away during the year, Myra Shephard, Brian Denmark, J Buxton, Grace Defew, Mike Hayes and Margaret Eke. Also all members past and present who are in poor health.

*“They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old, age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them”*

Welcome – A very warm welcome to all our new members this year, hopefully we will be able to meet in person in 2021.

Chairman’s report – In lieu of having an AGM my report looks back over the year. I hope you are all keeping safe and well and managing to avoid Covid-19. It’s a funny old time with the wearing of face masks and trying to stay 2 metres apart, but if we follow the rules we should come through this okay.

It seems such a long time ago since we had a Branch meeting, February in fact. At that meeting we had a very interesting talk by Mr David Reeve on his work as a Royal Protection Officer at Sandringham. He told us several stories about his experiences connected to his work. I don’t know if the one about his ‘long johns’ was to be taken with a pinch of salt!! My thanks must go to Martin Wynn for arranging this for us, it was very much appreciated.

On 20th February several members attended the fire station to present the Fire Service Cadets with their Affiliation Badges and certificate. The cadets then gave us a demonstration of their fire fighting skills. I must thank Don McNeight for all your hard work and liaising with Steven and the cadets.

On behalf of all the members I must thank Peter Howes, our Branch Standard Bearer and his support team for attending funerals and other limited events during the year.

VE Day was not celebrated by the Branch because of lockdown restrictions but many members did their own thing at home. Joy and I got our military vehicles out on the front lawn and sounded “*The All Clear*” our portable air raid siren. By VJ Day we were able to meet at the War Memorial at 11am for a short ceremony. A few members of the public joined us, but we were able to keep our 2 metres distance. It was the wish of the Town Council that the usual Remembrance Parade should not take place on Remembrance Sunday so as not to draw the usual large crowds. A much smaller event took place on Armistice Day to observe the 2 minutes silence and wreaths were laid at the War Memorial. Lots of the towns’ folk turned up to pay their respects.

Our Poppy Appeal was also very different this year, but thanks to Ann Rogerson’s ingenuity and hard work it has turned out much better than I expected. A very big thank you Ann.

Although we haven’t been able to have any social meetings since February I must thank Roy McGee and his team for the games and bingo nights. To Sandra McGee for the BCS work she has been able to do during these difficult times.



As we cannot hold an AGM due to the pandemic at a socially distant committee meeting, all the officers and committee members agreed to stay in post for another year. I thank everyone for this commitment.

As I have stated in the past I will continue to serve as Chairman until the end of our 100th anniversary year. This is my third term as Chairman over the last 50 years. The Branch will need a new leader to take it forward into the 100 years with fresh ideas and suggestions on how to grow the membership.

Finally, may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year and may we all be able to meet again soon.

Finance Report – As you will appreciate there has been little movement this year. For the year 1/7/19 – 30/6/20 the total income was £2,890.25; expenditure £3,796.66. The only significant expense was the donation of £500.00 to Halsey House. The year end balance is £4,025.70.

Poppy Appeal – The total for 2019 is £22,124.09. With all events cancelled during this summer I was not able to add to this amount as would normally have happened. The total to date for 2020 is just under £8,000.00, which is far more than expected. Right up to the start of the campaign the powers that be were making changes and I wasn't sure if we could go ahead. Thankfully, I was able to have use of a vacant shop in Wharton's Court, although I had to shut up shop early because of lockdown it was definitely worth doing and something to consider for next year. I have received several generous donations, from individuals, businesses and organisations. I would like to say a massive thank you to all my volunteers, old and new for stepping up to the mark in very difficult circumstances.



I know lots of people like to collect the dated Poppy pin badges and if you know someone who would like one please get in touch – I have plenty left!!



Report from the Assistant County Parade Marshall – Iain Colquhoun:

I would just like to give you a quick update as to what has been happening over the past few months. As Assistant, I have been supporting the County Parade Marshall, Peter Whitwell. We have attended a few functions, along with our own Branch Standard Bearer Peter Howes and Les Dunger. All events were risk assessed and socially distant. Peter Howes and Les Dunger have attended several funerals and represented our Branch extremely well. We were well supported by Branch members Fred Squires and Maurice Eke and Brian Bandy.

The 11th November was marked by an unofficial Ceremony at the War Memorial. This also was within the Government's COVID-19 guidance which did mean we only had our Branch Standard Bearer present. He was accompanied by Robert Rayner who played the bugle and our Chairman, John Morter who officiated the ceremony and laid the wreath on behalf of the Branch along with the Mayor, Kevin Hurn representing the town. I was very pleasantly surprised by the attendance and support from the local community.



County News – The RBL Norfolk Annual Meeting of County Conference will be very different in 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference will be a much shorter virtual event, with the majority of proposals, nominations and voting carried out via email prior to the conference. The date for this is Saturday 6th February. If anyone is interested in joining either the County Committee or the County Conference Committee please let me know as soon as possible, the deadline is 31st December 2020. I have been on the County committee for 2 years now as assistant County recruiting officer. At a recent meeting I was asked to consider joining the conference committee as well. This group only meets from about June/July time until the conference to plan for its smooth running on the day.

RBL Membership Centenary Awards

As we approach our Centenary the Legion is exploring how to reward and recognise the contribution of our members, staff and volunteers. It was identified that members, as a core part of our organisation's history and development, should be able to reward and recognise the contribution of their fellow members. To this end I am happy to confirm the launch of our Membership Centenary Awards Scheme.

Members and the public will be able to recognise members in their community that have contributed to our work. We hope that, with your involvement, we can show our members and the public what it means to be a member and inspire others to get involved in all that we do. It will be a great opportunity for members and branches to provide unique recognition to members who are not ordinarily recognised through the traditional awards process.

The scheme will follow a tiered structure like the Standard Bearers Competition structure, with Counties assessing nominations and announcing Award category winners. Please note that the submissions for County Awards need to be submitted by **15 December**.

Please find attached the guidance document for these awards as well as the nomination form. Both these documents will be made publicly available at rbl.org.uk/legion100.

A dedicated inbox has also been created for the later stages of the Awards scheme. If you have any queries relating to the scheme, please email membershipawards@britishlegion.org.uk.

Best Wishes,
Phil

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For clarity:

- **Closing date for nominations is 15th December 2020**
- **Nominators do not have to be Legion members, can also be members of the general public**
- **Nominees do have to be members of the Legion**
- **Nominators/Nominees can be Branch and/or County members**
- **Nominations do not have to be approved by committee**
- **Multiple nominations are acceptable**



And finally:- I know many of you will have missed going to Thursford in September for Beating Retreat in support of the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF). The British Army Band (Colchester) are performing a virtual Christmas Concert on Thursday 3rd December 1900 – 2030hrs. To see this log on to www.soldierscharity.org and scroll down to events, or click on the links below;

- YouTube – [ABF The Soldiers' Charity channel](#)
- ABF [national Facebook](#) and [local Facebook page](#) The concert is FREE to watch.

If you know of any veteran, member or their family who are in need of our help in any way please contact anyone of the numbers below. Please remember to keep yourself safe and follow the government guidelines:-

- Stay Alert to Stay Safe
- Keep 2 metres apart where possible
- Wear face coverings in shops
- Wash Hands regularly

HANDS - FACE - SPACE

Don't forget to look at our Branch website for up to date information; www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/wymondham or on facebook - Wymondham Royal British Legion.

President: Fred Squires 01953 798774	Chairman: John Morter 01953 602581
Vice Chair: Maurice Eke 01603 810820	Welfare/BCS: Sandra McGee 01953 601794
Secretary/PAO/CRO: Ann Rogerson 01953 602817	Events Co-ordinator: Roy McGee 01953 601794

In order to be more environmentally friendly we will be sending this out via email to those we hold an address for. If you have received this by post and have an email address and would be happy to receive emails from the Branch, please email as below.

If you would like to contribute to the next edition or make any comments please contact the editor, Ann Rogerson. 01953 602817 – 07967 143405
wymondham.secretary@rbl.community or alm.rogerson@icloud.com

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Wishing you a Merry Christmas & Health & Happiness for the New Year