



ROYAL  
BRITISH  
LEGION



RUSHDEN

Website <https://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/rushden/>

## RBL RUSHDEN BRANCH NEWSLETTER JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026

### WELCOME

Welcome and Happy New Year to you all. 2025 truly was a special year in many ways, with a range of historical and fun events that took place from our first RBL Rushden Branch Burns Night to commemorating and celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WW2 (VE Day) and VJ Day 80.

Newsletters will be produced every two months from now on so the next will be early March for March/April and May/June, etc. Please note the dates below in your diary for future events and please help where you can. **The Branch can only support community events with your help.**

RBL County Conference 2026 saw our President David Hawker awarded in his absence, due to illness, the RBL County Chairman's Certificate of Appreciation – we congratulate him and wish him a speedy recovery (Branch Vice Chair Paul McKay received the award on David's behalf). On behalf of the Branch Committee and our Members, our Chair Jake Baker received the Beacon Branch Gold Award; this is awarded in recognition of great things we do, such as Branch Compliance, Effective Branch Management, Recruiting and Retention of Branch Members, Fundraising, Remembrance, Community Events and fulfilling the RBL's Values and Behaviours. We congratulate RBL Brixworth Branch who also won this Gold Award. RBL Brixworth Branch was awarded the Bill Rose Memorial Award for the "Most Effective Branch in the County 2025-2026" which we won last year, beating RBL Rushden Branch by just one point. RBL Wellingborough are congratulated too with the Silver Award.

### WHAT'S ON IN 2026?

24<sup>th</sup> January – RDVG Burns Night

27<sup>th</sup> January – International Holocaust Remembrance Day organised by Rushden Town Council

**9<sup>rd</sup> March – RBL Rushden Branch Social**

2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> May – East Midlands Steam & Country Show, Lancaster Farm, Chelveston

8<sup>th</sup> May – 81<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of VE Day

8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May – RBL National Annual Conference – Brighton

**8<sup>th</sup> June – RBL Rushden Branch Social**

27<sup>th</sup> June – Armed Forces Day organised by the Rushden & District Veterans' Group

11<sup>th</sup> July – Party in the Park

August TBC – Classic Car Show

13<sup>th</sup> August – 86<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain

15<sup>th</sup> August – 81<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day

**14<sup>th</sup> September – RBL Rushden Branch Social**

3<sup>rd</sup> September – Merchant Navy Day organised by RBL Rushden Branch

6<sup>th</sup> September – Bark in the Park

2<sup>nd</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup>) October – 86<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombing of Alfred Lord Tennyson School

5<sup>th</sup> November – Rushden Schools Garden of Remembrance Ceremony at Rushden War Memorial

8<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service organised by Rushden Town Council

11<sup>th</sup> November – Armistice Day organised by Rushden Town Council

16<sup>th</sup> November – Branch AGM – **3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month**

28<sup>th</sup> November – Rushden Christmas Lights Switch On

**14<sup>th</sup> December – RBL Rushden Branch Social**

## **YOUTH MEMBER INTRODUCTION – BY THEO MIZON**



My name is Theo Mizon; I have been a youth member of the Royal British Legion (Rushden Branch) for almost 5 months now. In this time, I have taken on the responsibility of Standard Bearer and recently I have had the privilege to carry the standard at the Annual County Conference earlier this month, as seen in the picture.

Outside of RBL, I have many interests such as sports, like Rugby and Inline Roller-Hockey and my favourite interest, Army Cadets. I have been part of the Rushden Army Cadet Force for over 3 years now and currently hold the rank of Corporal. I have future aspirations of joining the Army as an Officer and training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). At the moment I plan to join an infantry regiment such as the Royal Anglian Regiment.

I was always fairly aware of the RBL through cadets and have helped with the Poppy Appeal as part of that but had never considered joining. However, at a detachment evening, Nick Fall and Mark Taberner-Stokes from RBL came in to teach us standard drill. This really interested me, especially as this was a way in which junior members could get involved.

Since joining the RBL I have realised how important it is to the country as a whole. I firmly believe that the work to support past and present servicemen and women and their families is of great importance. I would encourage everyone to join including younger people, like me. You don't have to have been a Veteran or been involved in any Cadet Forces; you just need to have a respect for the Armed Forces and all that it stands for.

### **RDVG BURNS NIGHT – 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026**

Looming up is the Burns Night at The Masonic Hall, Wellingborough Road, Rushden, on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2026, 7pm for 7.30pm. This is being organised by the Rushden & District Veterans' Group (RDVG) and offers another great opportunity to enjoy Scottish Poetry, Bagpipes and this time round, Amanda's Highland Dancers from Corby. The cost will be £33 a head; this event is open to the public and has been advertised in social media. The RDVG will need to know who is coming and whether there are any special dietary requirements, such as gluten free, vegan, nut allergies, etc. Attendees must be over 18 years of age. Don't miss out on what promises to be another great Burns Night out! Names to Jake Baker on **07525 441267** by close of play this Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

### **RBL NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY CONFERENCE 2026**

This annual event was held in the splendid Guildhall of Northampton in Giles Square, Northampton and was well attended by Branch Committee Members and our Poppy Appeal Organiser Ruth Miller. Branch Standard Bearer Mark Taberner-Stokes carried the County Standard, whilst recently trained Youth Member Theo Mizon carried our Branch Standard; both looked immaculately attired. Guests included Brigadier David Russell Parsons OBE DL representing the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, John Thornhill MBE RBL National Trustee, Councillor Jane Birch Town Mayor of Northampton, Councillors Mark Arnull (West

Northants Council), Maurice Eglin and Leon Gibbs (both from North Northants Council). Membership Council Representative Hugh Ashton-Moore and Membership Engagement Officer Lebo Nyoni were also present. Much ground was covered and the RBL County Chair, Ian Byrnes delivered his report. Minutes of the Conference including the Chair's Report will be sent as soon as they are available. Branch Community Coordinator Peter Armstrong was duly appointed County Youth Officer. A few images of the day are below: all accredited to Phil Blanchard.



**Left:** Mark Taberberner-Stokes, far left and Theo Mizon in the middle of the three & **Right:** Two minutes silence



**Left:** Branch Vice Chair Paul McKay accepting from RBL National Trustee John Thornhill MBE, the RBL County's Certificate of Award Appreciation Award 2026 on behalf of Branch President David Hawker.  
**Right:** Branch Chair Jake Baker receiving the Beacon Branches Gold Award.

## RBL ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE – 8<sup>TH</sup> – 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2026

Find out more or register your place from 15<sup>th</sup> January via the [Annual Conference webpage](#). Registration to attend in person closes 12pm midday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Registration to attend online closes 12pm midday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

The RBL Annual Conference 2026 will take place at the Brighton Centre, located right on the seafront of the vibrant southeastern seaside town of Brighton, East Sussex.

Please note, late registrations may not be accepted.

During registration, details will be collected concerning mobility and medical requirements, and expenses details for voting delegates who are attending in person. On completion of registration, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement.

All delegates and visitors must register online. The RBL regrets that they cannot accept applications sent by post or email. For non-delegate registration queries, please contact [membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk)

Who can attend? In-person and online attendance is open to all members and their accompanying guests or carers. Voting delegates may attend and vote online. During registration, you will be asked to select your type and mode of attendance.

## WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS

### Second Monday of every month except March, June, September and December

– **Branch Monthly Meetings** at the Athletic Club commencing 7.30pm. The next Branch Monthly Meeting is on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026, which will be followed by the Speaker Nick Cooke about “*The Great Train Robbery.*”

**Fourth Tuesday of every month** – The Community Social & Craft Group meet at the Rushden Athletic Club on Newton Road, between 1pm and 3pm. RAFA Members Free. Guests £3/entry or £20 per year. Open to any RBL Rushden Branch Member. For more information contact Carol on **07922 141589** or [carol.easton12@gmail.com](mailto:carol.easton12@gmail.com) Next meets are on 27<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February.

**Every Wednesday & Saturday Morning** – 9am start. Northants Breakfast Club (**NBC**) dine at The Needle and Awl. All Veterans are welcome. Families are invited to join on the last Saturday of each month, which will be on 31<sup>st</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February.

**First Thursday of every month** – 10am to 12.30pm – **Friends of the Legion** meet at The Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden. Pop along for a cuppa and a chat any time between 10am and 12.30pm. The next meets are on 5<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> March.

**Second Thursday of every month - NGH Breakfast Club** at Northampton General Hospital, Cliftonville, Northampton, NN1 5BD. **Eat Street** is the hospital restaurant on the main corridor through the hospital opposite the Chapel. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks. The next **NGH Breakfast Club** meets are on 5<sup>th</sup> February and 12<sup>th</sup> March.

**NEW – Last Thursday of Every Month** – 10am -11.30am – Bilton Court Care Home would like to invite you to their **Veterans Coffee Morning** at Bilton Court Care Home, Queensway, Wellingborough, NN8 3FR. For more details phone **01933 401613** or pop in. The next **Veterans Coffee Mornings** are on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and 26<sup>th</sup> February.

**Last Friday of every month** – 9am start – **KGH Breakfast Club** at Kettering General Hospital, Rothwell Road, Kettering, NN16 8UZ. The Basement Brassiere is located on the lower ground floor of the main hospital building. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks. The next **KGH Breakfast Club** meets are on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

## RBL WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

**DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, OR DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN OR RBL MEMBER WHO NEEDS HELP? IF SO, PLEASE CALL OUR BRANCH COMMUNITY SUPPORTER, PAUL MCKAY ON 07305 837099 OR VIA EMAIL (SEE THE LIST OF WHO'S WHO ON PAGE 10). YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT THE BRANCH COMMUNITY COORDINATOR, PETER ARMSTRONG ON 07498 243683. HIS EMAIL ADDRESS IS ALSO AT WHO'S WHO? REMEMBER, THE RBL IS HERE FOR YOU. IF THEY CAN'T HELP, THEY'LL GET YOU HELP. PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT EVERY SITUATION IS DIFFERENT.**

## **BRANCH COMMUNITY SUPPORT – A MESSAGE FROM PAUL MCKAY**

As part of the RBL's long-term Vision and Mission plan, Branch Community Support (BCS) has been given renewed priority as a key initiative to strengthen local community connections, enhance wellbeing, and ensure every member of the Armed Forces community receives the support they deserve. BCS sits at the heart of the RBL's short-term goals (over the next three years) and its long-term strategic direction. I am honoured to serve as one of the first Rushden Branch Community Support volunteers—and I hope many more will join me.

Although we remain a proudly volunteer-led organisation, the engagement, wisdom and lived experience of our most senior and long-standing members are central to building a more connected and supportive community. With your involvement, we can continue to grow a branch that truly reflects the spirit of service, camaraderie and care.

### **● Strengthening Camaraderie – Our Commitment to Each Other**

Across the RBL, one of our key goals is enhancing how the Armed Forces community connects. For us at branch level, this means:

- Making the most of our volunteer capacity, physical spaces to bring people together.
- Creating simple, accessible digital touchpoints for those who may find it difficult to attend in person.
- Understanding the needs of all senior members so no one feels left behind.

Your stories, experience and presence are at the heart of what makes our branch special.

### **● Building a Supportive Community – Together We Grow**

The national strategy reinforces the importance of growing local community support. As your BCS Officer, this includes:

- Expanding our Community Support activities, e.g. visiting, befriending, check-ins, and welfare support.
- Empowering more members to get involved in small but meaningful ways without being on the committee.
- Strengthening our collective branch voice in the wider community in support of the Armed Forces community.

Even a small amount of your time can have a big impact on a fellow veteran.

### **● Celebrating Our Story – Keeping Remembrance Alive**

Part of the RBL's long-term work is refreshing and modernising how we tell our story of Remembrance. At branch level, we will:

- Continue to honour our traditions while engaging new generations particularly our work with local schools.
- Share local stories and memories that will better shape our community for the challenges ahead.
- Encourage participation in poppy displays and remembrance activities both traditional and modern.

Every member carries a piece of our shared heritage; together we keep it alive.

## 🎯 Supporting Changing Needs – Practical Help Where It Matters

The RBL nationally is enhancing its support to veterans and families, and Rushden Branch will need to deliver on this focus especially around:

- Early interventions to identify when and where our members need help
- Recovery and wellbeing services

While 'welfare' services are delivered centrally (through the BCS gateway as required), our branch plays a vital role in signposting, guiding, and ensuring no one feels they must face challenges alone.

### How You Can Help

Many of our senior and long-standing members, whether regular attendees at events and meetings, or not, have seen service, community and leadership at every level. Your contribution and experience is invaluable. If you feel able to contribute, whether through companionship visits, sharing your story, joining activities, or simply staying connected; we would be honoured to have your support as a BCS volunteer.

With your support, we can strengthen our branch family and build a more supportive, active, and engaged community for all. It takes very little time, often just a listening ear and a friendly conversation over a cup of tea.

If you would like to volunteer, request support, or simply have a chat, please contact me directly. See the next page for my contact details.

### TIME FOR A BIT OF HUMOUR!! 🤡



For my wife's birthday I made her a polystyrene Submarine....it didn't go Down very well.

Just had a letter delivered, confirming I have secured a job at Royal Mail. I start last Monday.

Had the worst day ever. I paid a joiner to build me a double bed, and he's done a bunk. It's just one thing on top of another.

I believe that there's a special place in Hull, reserved for the guy who invented predictive text.

So, two men from the gas board, a senior training supervisor and a young trainee, are out checking meters in a new housing estate.

They park their van one end of a street and work their way to the other end.

At the last house, auld Netty is looking out her kitchen window watching the two men as they go past her gas meter.

Finishing the meter check, the senior supervisor challenges his young coworker to a foot race down the street back to the truck to prove that an older guy can outrun a younger one.

As they come running up to the van, they realize the lady from that last house they checked is huffing and puffing right behind them.

They stop and ask her what is wrong.

Gasping for breath, auld Netty replies,

"Son, when I see two men from the gas board running as hard as you two were, I figured I'd better run as well!"

## WHO'S WHO IN OUR BRANCH?

President - David Hawker: via [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Chair/Media Rep: Jake Baker [rushden.chairman@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.chairman@rbl.community) 07525 441267

Vice Chair – Paul McKay: [rushden.vicechairman@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.vicechairman@rbl.community) 07305 837099

Secretary – Lynne Baker: [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Treasurer – Janet Flowers: [rushden.treasurer@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.treasurer@rbl.community)

Standard Bearer - Mark Taberner-Stokes: via [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Youth Member Standard Bearer - Theo Mizon: via [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Committee Member – Heather Phillip: via [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Committee Member – Sally Morton: via [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Committee Member – Ray Burke: [ramondo4@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ramondo4@yahoo.co.uk) 07853 085368

Committee Member – Steve Miller: via [rushden.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.secretary@rbl.community)

Branch Padre – Pauline Cook: [richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk) 07871 923337

Deputy Branch Padre – Richard Cook: [richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk) 07871 923337

**BCC – Peter Armstrong:** [parmstrong.bcs1@rbl.community](mailto:parmstrong.bcs1@rbl.community) 07498 243683

**BCS & BCC – Paul McKay:** [rushden.bcc2@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.bcc2@rbl.community) or [rushden.vicechairman@rbl.community](mailto:rushden.vicechairman@rbl.community) also [PMcKay.BCS@rbl.community](mailto:PMcKay.BCS@rbl.community) You can also call him on 07305 837099

Poppy Appeal Organiser – Ruth Miller: [poppyappealrushden@gmail.com](mailto:poppyappealrushden@gmail.com)

Deputy Poppy Appeal Organiser – Steve Miller: [poppyappealrushden@gmail.com](mailto:poppyappealrushden@gmail.com)

## COUNTY YOUTH OFFICER – PETER ARMSTRONG

The membership youth policy states that the following regulations that I, as the County Youth Officer, must conform to.

Within Northamptonshire, there are 27 branches that are affiliated with youth/uniform organisations. (A complete list will be made available from Haig House).

To clarify, a youth/young person is someone under the age of 18 years.

The RBL is not a youth organisation and does not conduct youth-specific activities, but it is recognised that the Branch, where affiliation is associated to, conducts activities where young people may be involved or be present, providing that the young person is accompanied by and remains the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

### My role as the County Youth Officer:

- I must maintain a register of the county's youth affiliated groups and should oversee the process of affiliation within the county. This should reflect the centrally held register.
- I must maintain oversight of activities within the county which may involve young people and ensure that the relevant documents are being adhered to.

### Branch meetings/activities attended by young people must adhere to:

- RBL safeguarding policy
- Membership youth policy
- Keeping Yourself safe guide.

### Branch Chairs and Secretaries must:

- Ensure that any activities related to young people are formally recorded in minutes
- Ensure that sufficient supervision by responsible adults is present at any activity
- Keep a confidential record of their youth members on the branch area of MAP (Members Admin Portal)
- Ensure that branch members follow the relevant policy and procedures where young people are involved in an activity
- Ensure that young people's personal data is protected

### Activities involving young people

Any activity which involves young people must be a formal activity which has been agreed at a branch meeting and is recorded in the meeting minutes.

- Youth standard bearer training (Between the age of 14 – 18 years)

- Schools' remembrance parade/service
- Presentations to schools or youth organisations.

Branches must consider and agree which members are most suitable for organising and undertaking the activities.

**Youth Affiliation** - This is a formalised partnership between Legion branches and local youth/uniformed organisations and will involve joint working to achieve the aims of the Legion, including fundraising, Remembrance and connecting with the community.

To provide clear opportunities for the young people to develop knowledge, skills and experience.

Be mutually beneficial ie: the Branch offers the youth organisation support as much as the youth organisation supports the RBL. This could be through talks, for example, or support with fundraising.

**Youth Members** (Youth membership will end in 2029) - Youth Members of the RBL are between the ages of 12 and 18 years and will expire on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, after which they are welcome to apply for full membership.

Youth members are welcome to participate in branch activities (accompanied by an adult) but cannot hold any office until they become adult members.

Youth members should be encouraged to become Standard Bearers, branch advocates in their communities and to raise awareness of the Legion work.

As you can see, this is a large task to do, so what I would like to see is that each branch nominates a Youth Liaison officer to assist me.

If anyone is interested, please contact me on the email below

**Northamptonshire.CYO@rbl.community**

## **DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE RIGHTFULLY ENTITLED TO? DO YOU NEED ANY BUDGET SUPPORT OR SOMEONE TO HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR FINANCES?**

Let's be frank and honest about this; many of us don't know what we may be rightfully entitled to. Some of us think we don't qualify or may be means tested or we are simply too proud, embarrassed or scared to ask for help eg if one has difficulty walking, uses a stick or a mobility scooter due to a medical condition(s), they may be entitled to **Attendance Allowance which is NOT means tested**, so it doesn't matter if you've got savings to the value of a £1,000 or £100,000!

Last week, Branch Chair Jake Baker met Tracey Kennedy, who leads the Social Inclusion Team from North Northants Council. Tracey is keen to ensure the Armed Forces Community, that's us veterans, families of veterans, etc are aware of benefits, allowances, etc and can also help with debt issues, financial management, budgeting, etc. Tracey's team are so supportive, **they will even come to your home and help fill in the forms**. This is a great service open to everybody, so please give this a lookie – you never know, you may be entitled to a lot more than just the winter fuel allowance.

The Social Inclusion Team will look at any collective debts such as Council Tax, Rental and Creditors and can advise accordingly. They may even try to help reduce the debt by liaising with a company to freeze the interest or suggest a long-term plan such as paying £5 a week to clear them. Have a look at the poster on the next page and call the team or use the self-referral form on the final page of this Newsletter.

Finally, after the meeting, as Tracey and Jake left Happy Monday's Café, they bumped into an elderly couple who are former members of the Branch and upon politely asking them if they are in receipt of Attendance Allowance, one asked what it was and when explained, the other said they've got savings, so it won't apply. Not true! We know they'll be entitled to over £200 per month and encouraged them to apply. **Go for it, you've got nothing to lose! Happier days may lie ahead.**



**Stop the wolves from  
knocking on your door.  
Come along and see the  
Social Inclusion team for  
advice on:**

**Benefits and Support**

We can offer you advice on **how to claim housing benefit, council tax support and DWP benefits.**

**Household Budget**

We can help you look at your household budget and discuss ways to **reduce your bills, apply for charity grants, reduce your household bills** and make **arrangements with creditors.**

**Credit Union Account**

We can help **set up a Credit Union account** and help arrange for your income to be paid directly in and your bills to be paid out of the account.

**We can also  
offer advice on  
Discretionary  
Housing  
Support and  
Discretionary  
Council Tax  
Support.**



North  
Northamptonshire  
Council

**Contact Details**

✉ [budgetingsupport@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:budgetingsupport@northnorthants.gov.uk)

☎ 01536 805666

## Budget Support/Credit Union Referral Form

Customer Details:		
Name:		
Address:		
Telephone number:		
Appointment Details:		
When is the best time to arrange an appointment?		
<b>Type of appointment required:</b>		
Budget Support (to reduce your household bills and make arrangements with creditors)	Yes	No
Benefits to check entitlement to any benefits	Yes	No
Open a Credit Union account (includes making arrangements with creditors)	Yes	No
Please give details of what further assistance the customer would like to receive		
Referred by:		
Company:		
Date:	Please email this form to: <a href="mailto:budgetingsupport@northnorthants.gov.uk">budgetingsupport@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>	