



We will remember them

Message from Chris Simpkins - Director General

Prime Minister David Cameron has unveiled plans to mark the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day from Friday 08 May to Sunday 10 May.

The Royal British Legion will be playing a key delivery role in the commemorations, which will be overseen by former Foreign Secretary, William Hague, now the Leader of the Commons.

Events will include a wreath laying at the Cenotaph, a National Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey, a parade through Whitehall and a reception for veterans on Horse Guards Parade.

As the national custodian of Remembrance, and in the spirit of *Live On*, our overriding aim for VE Day 70 is to provide opportunities for people to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in the course of WW2; to reflect once more upon the global and lasting significance of that event; and also to recreate the public sense of euphoria and relief that people so keenly associated with the end of hostilities.

It will also provide us with many opportunities to inform the public of the Legion's crucial welfare support of this very special Service generation and all those in the Armed Forces community.

Plans are also under way to mark the final cessation of hostilities and the 70th anniversary of VJ Day on 15 August.

Our aim is to encourage communities throughout the UK to participate in similar VE Day events and to salute not only veterans, but all those who also served the war effort at home - a challenge that we hope will be accepted by staff, members, volunteers and supporters across the Legion family.

More specific details on the Legion's organisational support to the commemorative events will be announced in coming weeks.

Regards, *Chris*

Borough Market - Supporting TRBL

On Tuesday 27 January 2015, Borough Market's Managing Director, Keith Davis, visited the London RBL Pop In Centre to present one of the limited edition framed poppy prints that were produced in response to public demand following the Market's WW1 Commemoration Service in July 2014, at which Standard Bearers, Penny Bell-Wright (Richmond Branch) and Brendon Farrell (Enfield Branch) were in attendance to represent the Legion in London.



L-R: Penny and Brendon with illustrator James Oses, accepting the limited edition print at the London Pop In Centre.

This act of generosity was in appreciation of Penny and Brendon elevating the quality of the Market's Service by their presence. Keith Davis also presented a cheque for £575 from the sale of poppy prints to the Poppy Appeal. Thanks to Penny and Brendon reacting to the request to attend, our beneficiaries will benefit and the profile of the Legion raised via Borough Market's website.

<http://www.boroughmarket.org.uk/borough-market-donates-to-royal-british-legion>

A big thank you to Borough Market for supporting

The Royal British Legion and to Brendon and Penny.



Above -- Ryan Allain, Area Manager - London, accepting the donation from Borough Market's Managing Director, Keith Davis.

Penny Bell-Wright

This year saw Penny Bell-Wright complete her three year term of office on the GLD Committee.

Penny was one of the original Officers who stepped up to the challenge of running the newly formed District. Penny's hard work and commitment have contributed immensely to the running of the GLD. Penny never hesitated to come forward when volunteers were needed to sit on the Fund Raising sub Committee, Conference Committee and fill demanding roles such as the Principal District Recruiting Officer and responding to numerous calls for Standard Bearer representation at internal and external Remembrance services and parades.

A huge thank you goes out to Penny and best wishes for all she does in the future - Richmond Branch must feel privileged to have such a dedicated member on board.

Comradeship in Action

Stephen Goddard, the Branch Chairman reported that James White, the Buckhurst Hill President - a WW2 Navy Veteran - loves entertaining and in true Dunkirk Spirit, (and yes he was at Dunkirk for the D-Day landings) offered up his home for the Executive Committee Meetings, thus saving previous Legion expenditure on room hire at the local Community Centre. This suggestion was gratefully received and since April, James has had the pleasure of welcoming them to his home. Under his guidance, Janice, the Branch's esteemed Vice Chairwoman, took on the role of "Tea Lady" whilst James kept a strict eye on the consumption of biscuits! It



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goes to show when comradeship is thriving, a resourceful and functional close knit Branch work positively together, contributing to the success of the Branch and Poppy Appeal.

Laying up of the 4 Met Standards

Final arrangements are being made for the Laying Up ceremony, Saturday 21 March 2015 at 3.00pm at St George the Martyr Church. Branch Standard Bearers are invited to join the Parade, to form up by 2.45pm at TRBL Head Office, Haig House location, 199 Borough High Street, to march a short distance to the church for the Service starting at 3pm.



The Service will be followed by a reception in the Crypt function rooms. Standard Bearers wishing to attend should RSVP to the Ceremonial Officer, Stan Heath on 01784 255006. All other Greater London District members should RSVP to Membership Support Officer sstephenson@britishlegion.org.uk .

Comradeship Services Project

Collection of Affiliation Fees - MAY

Most branches should now be aware there is a major change approaching, as to the method of joining, payment and renewal, operating this year forward.

Before implementation of the new processes, to simplify the migration of data into the new system there will be only one final invoice produced for each branch in **May**. The National Conference Committee has been informed of the impact this may have on the verification of Delegates' credentials for Annual Conference and has decided that due to this delay the payment of the Affiliation Fees will not be taken into account when issuing the delegates' credentials.

IMPORTANT – New Joiner Processes

From 30 March 2015 the current MS4 new joiner forms will cease to be accepted and processed. On Line Joining will also cease from this date. Systems will go live again on 18 May, including On Line Joining for ALL branches. There may be some delays during April and May as no applications will be processed. Whilst the system is closed, the invoices can mature and final statements sent to branches with a collection to zero the membership debt in early May. This should not stop recruitment at branch level as Membership Services are hoping to provide a new form aligned to the new database, which can be retained by branches until they start processing the applications again.

More detailed information will be forthcoming from Head Office as and when the new processes and procedures (regarding new joiners, payment of fees and renewal), are ready to be rolled out for branches to put in operation.

50th Anniversary of The State Funeral of Sir Winston Churchill - 30th January 2015

Churchill's State Funeral was broadcast live to an estimated worldwide audience of 350 million viewers on 30 January 1965. An inspiring example of how our local RBL branches contribute to historic events was witnessed when 50 years on the Havengore made the same trip up the river Thames. Ian Tyson's letter below, outlines the event in full.



"In 1965 I was doing some heavy running pushing HM Submarine Anchorite around the Malay Peninsular and saw nothing of Sir Winston's State Funeral.

Some years ago I had been asked by the Harbour Master of the Port of London (an ex submarine skipper), if I could help the owner of MV Havengore, Mr Chris Ryland, reinstate the casting

of a wreath on the Thames off Parliament at 11:00 on the 11th of the 11th each year. I was due to retire from my involvement in ceremonial events in London last year but it was an honour to be asked to stay on for this special occasion.

The wreath had been made at the Poppy Factory where I was a tour guide. We laid it up in the Chapel of the Tower of London two weeks before the 30th January Commemoration."

Our aim was to echo that historic 1965 State Funeral as much as we could, Havengore being the principal player. With only one meeting prior to the 30th and no time to rehearse, the participants met up for the first time one hour before the march off from the Tower of London.

The Wreath Bearer was Captain George Trypanis of the Queen's Royal Hussars, Sir Winston's old regiment. His four escorts were from the RAF Regiment with reversed arms. Led by Colonel Ian Harris Army, and from the American Embassy Commander Terrance Dudley USN (representing Sir Winston's American Citizenship), the Wreath party hopefully echoed the Gun Carriage.

The Gun Carriage Crew were echoed by senior students from the Royal Hospital School Holbrook (RHS) in full naval uniform – ten in front and ten behind. They were immaculate and so proud. The procession was headed by two pipers and a bugler from The Rifles. Bringing up the rear were six members of the Queen's Waterman.

With such a mixed bunch, a slow march meant something different to each of them, especially when marching to the pipes. The Tower walls resounded to the pipes as we all 'rehearsed' the choreography half an hour before stepping out before the public.

The Chief Yeoman Warder of the Tower with two escorts paraded the wreath from the chapel to ceremoniously pass it back in to our care and for us to march it to HMS President – the stone frigate.

At HMS President and with the RAF and RHS Guards presenting arms, the wreath party comprising myself, Lee Greed ex Royal Artillery (my relief on Havengore and the Standard Bearer and Chairman of the Teddington Branch – Teddington being where Havengore was built), Captain Trypanis and Petty Officer Green from HMS President, slow marched the wreath to embark. With the RHS band playing 'Rule Britannia', we slipped at 1240 with PO Green Piping the side.

Tower Bridge was raised in salute. HMS Belfast piped giving Havengore a four gun salute as we proceeded towards Parliament for the service and the casting of the wreath on the Thames by the two veteran Guards Officers who had been on parade 50 years ago. We saluted the RN Submariners Memorial, HQS Wellington and the RAF Memorial en route.

The picture shows myself on the left piping the side, the two Guards Veterans casting the wreath, Lee as escort and then the Bugler from The Rifles.

After the formalities were over, we proceeded down to Greenwich for the social with Churchill's family – hip flask filled with Pussers at the ready. We all toasted Havengore and 'Absent Friends'.

So my message to those members of the RBL who were there in 1965 - it was a privilege to have carried on your heritage, even if on a far smaller scale. We all did our best to meet your legacy of extremely high standards. A bit late, but from one who now has some idea of what it must have taken – 'Bravo Zulu' – the signal hoist signal used in the Royal Navy to say 'Well done'.

Ian Tyson MSM
(Standard Bearer Twickenham Branch RBL)

National Conference - Southport

Message from Head Office

At their meeting on 10 February, the Conference Committee agreed on the programme for Annual Conference 16-17 May 2015. Full details will be circulated in the Provisional Agenda but you should note that:

1. The start of the first session of Conference on Saturday will be at 9.30am rather than 11am;
2. The Membership Forum will be an integral part of Conference and will take place at 2pm on Saturday;
3. There will be no Saturday night band concert due to poor attendance in previous years;
4. Motions and Charter Motions will be discussed from 10am on Sunday.

Following the success of the early registration last year, this year the delegates will again be able to register on Friday afternoon. The registration desk will be opened 3pm - 8pm.

The following events will be held at the same time as last year:

- The Overseas Forum - Friday afternoon;
- The Standard Bearers Competition - Friday afternoon;
- The Parade - Saturday afternoon;
- The Awards Ceremony - Sunday morning.

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The West Lancashire County and Southport Branch are planning to hold a social evening with live music on Friday evening at the Southport Theatre and Convention Centre. The details of this event will be announced later.

Please contact the Annual Conference Administrator at annualconference@britishlegion.org.uk if you have any queries.

The Provisional Agenda will be available on this website from 1 March. Hard copies will be sent by post to the Branch Secretaries at the beginning of March.

Accommodation – Block Booking for GLD



Irene Brockey, GLD Committee Officer, is holding a block booking for GLD delegates or visitors who intend to go to Southport to attend National Conference.

Irene has 5 twin rooms left at £75 each incl. bed, breakfast and evening meal. If you wish to take advantage of this offer and be booked in at the Scarisbrick Hotel, with other comrades, please contact Irene on;

Telephone 01784 248285 or e-Mail irenebrockey888@btinternet.com.

Payment in full before the 20th April 2015.

Ace Café, RBLR Annual Meet Sunday 24 May -



The Ace Café London is a famous transport cafe in Stonebridge, North West London - it is a notable venue in motorcycle culture, which originally operated from 1938 until 1969, then re-opened on the original site in 1997 and featured in some classic 60's films.

The Riders London Branch along with the Harrow Branch, each year meet up at the Ace Café for a fun filled event of stands selling RBL items, biker T-Shirts and clothes, flag and badge merchandise, music bands, presentation ceremony of various Rider and Bike Awards and more.



So grab your leathers, watch a couple of SOA episodes, pull on your biker boots, treat yourself to a fry up, live music and an awesome gathering of motor bikes at the Ace Café, N Circular Rd, London, Stonebridge, NW10 7UD.

WW1 Rededication at Marylebone Station - Standard Bearers required

Marylebone Train Station is organising the rededication of three of their WW1 Memorials, depicting 42 Names, mostly from the London Regiments and Queen's Victoria Rifles. The organisers have traced some of the relatives of those who lost their lives and some will be in attendance on the day along with serving London Reservists. They have invited RBL Standard Bearers to attend the Ceremony on **16 April 2015**, but due to limited space at the station, escorts are

NOT required to accompany them.

Standard Bearers who are able to attend, should contact Stan Heath, GLD Ceremonial

Officer, on 01784255006, before 31 March 2015. This is a high profile event that requires professionalism and impeccable turn out. Exact time TBC.



WW1 Commemoration - 20 March

St Edmunds Catholic Primary School

Have invited RBL members to a performance of WW1 poetry and songs with one or two of the children giving solo instrumental performances and the Dance Club will be performing a dance based on the Christmas Truce of 1914.

The children have found out about some of the local soldiers who died in the war and will be remembering them with a 2 minute silence. There will be a sing-along at the end, in order to finish on an optimistic note!

Tickets for the FRIDAY evening performance (**20 March at 6:30pm**) will be **FREE** but a collection will be made and tea and Trench Cake sold in aid of the **Royal British Legion**. They are hoping that some of the members of local RBL branches will join them as guests. Location of school is on the corner of Hertford Road and Bounces Road - N9 7HJ. To reserve seats please RSVP to Yvonne Pearson on mobile: 07847092717 or school: 020 8807 2664.

Branch Fund Initiative (BFI) - New Policy

John Graham, Deputy Director General, at RBL Head Office wrote to all Branch Chairmen in November 2014 with branch accounts holding in excess of £5,000 of cash and COIF investments. The letter outlined the new policy that has the full backing of The Board of Trustees, the Membership Council and the County Chairmen at Staverton.

Branches may retain a maximum of £5,000 in their current account and anything above that (or anything that is not immediately needed) **must** be deposited in BFI. Head Office know from last year's returns that only 130 branches had an annual expenditure in excess of £5,000 so for all but a few branches, £5,000 represents more than one year's expenditure. If your funds are only just over £5,000 you may consider reducing the balances to below £5,000 by making a donation to the District Welfare Fund. This will then remove you from the requirement to use BFI for as long as you keep your balance below £5,000.

The BFI is a home for surplus funds and branches participating to retain their present bank current account. The day to day operations of the branch are not affected and branches will be able to continue to conduct their business within the branch and in line with the procedures set out in the Membership Handbook.

If you are holding funds in COIF you will have noticed that of late, the returns are poor and in

order to maximise investment return, the advice was to liquidate those holdings and re-invest in the BFI. For assistance (if you wish to redeem your COIF accounts) please send an email to branchfunds@britishlegion.org.uk.

Money up to the value of £1,000 may be withdrawn from BFI at 4 working days' notice on the authority of the branch committee. Any withdrawal above that figure needs to be countersigned by the District Chairman but this will again be processed within 4 working days. This process is working very successfully and with over 700 branches currently engaged in BFI, TRBL have a satisfied group of branches willing to share their experience.

County Chairmen were briefed at their meeting at Staverton in September 2014 and were fully supportive of the reasons why TRBL is making this Policy extension. It is hoped to complete the extension by the end of the Field financial year in June 2015. Please complete and return your funds to Haig House for the attention of Tom Cantwell. If you have any queries, please contact your Membership Support Officer in first instance. Alternatively, you can e-mail branchfunds@britishlegion.org.uk

It takes eight to tango

Membership Council (MC) decided at their 17 December 2014 meeting, that those branches that are one year behind in submitting their accounts would receive a letter warning them of the gravity of the situation and that further action will be taken if they do not rectify the situation promptly. These branches were required to submit their accounts within the next 30 days. The branch were advised that if they had a BFI account, failure to submit their accounts would result in the account being frozen and any requests to have the money withdrawn from the BFI account would not be processed until their audited accounts had been received. MC have been very sad to learn that a number of branches face problems due to a lack of active members or lack of people willing to be elected to the branch committee and as a result, they struggle to comply with ALL Legion policies and procedures. Other branches may be facing similar problems making it very difficult to continue in their present state. For instance, they may be functioning without a full complement of Officers and Committee Members.

In these cases, branches need to work closely with their District Committee in finding a suitable solution, either through amalgamation, closure or becoming a sub-branch. Closure of a branch need not result in members being unable

to retain their membership or continue to support the Charity. The District can at this point offer assistance in helping you with the branch administration, organising a Special General Meeting (SPG) and asking the remaining members; whether they wish to be transferred to a neighbouring branch or any other branch. Your local Membership Support Officer will be the first point of contact in case of any queries. It is an unfortunate trend that RBL branches are finding themselves in a position where they may not be able to support TRBL work in its current form and may lose a local RBL presence. Therefore it is essential Committees do everything in their power to rectify the situation with due haste.

Data Protection

The Legion has issued a new Data Protection Policy (SOP 95) which has recently been sent to all branches by the Membership Support Officer. It is important that the handling of membership lists which contain personal information complies with the policy. Branch Officers are responsible for security and confidentiality of personal information in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998.

FREE - Screening for enlarged aorta

National Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme

Are you a man aged 65 years and over? - A quick simple scan could save your life.

The aorta is the largest blood vessel in the body and when it dilates this is called an aneurysm.

The AAA Screening Programme aims to reduce deaths from ruptured aortic aneurysms. If you would like further information:

<http://aaa.screening.nhs.uk/> or alternatively please phone **North Central London AAA Screening Programme: 0800 804 8002.**

GLD AGM of District Conference

On Saturday 7 February 2015 the AGM of District Conference took place at the Harrow Branch - in attendance were: 16 delegates; 5 SB; 18 GLD Committee; 17 Visitors.

The President of the Harrow Branch welcomed speakers: The Worshipful, Councillor **Ajay Maru**, Mayor of Harrow; Deputy Director General; John Graham and Ms Lou Browning, Head Teacher, Norbury School in Harrow.

Reg Pinney - Vice Chairman of the GLD chaired the meeting in Rob Richier's absence. Following Rob's resignation, in accordance with the Royal Charter, Reg was formally appointed as the GLD Chairman at the first immediate Committee Meeting following the Conference. Reg Pinney

as the next placed candidate in the Chairman elections 2013, will fill the role for the remaining 1 year term of Office.

Branches have been emailed the DRAFT Minutes of the Conference, any branches who have not received these should email sstephenson@britishlegion.org.uk for a copy. Full Officer and Appointment details are found below.

Dates for Flying the Union Jack



2015 dates can be found online at:-
<https://www.gov.uk/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>

Chairman's Message

Reg Pinney would like all the GLD Branches to know how much he is looking forward to his new role as District Chairman for the year ahead. He welcomes invitations from branches that would like him to visit, update on developments and discuss any ideas on how to take the Legion forward in London.

Please email reg.pinney@virginmedia.com with your request and contact details.



*'When you go home, tell them of us and say,
 For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'*

Greater London District Committee

Name	Position	Local Branch Member
Reginald Pinney	Chairman	Southgate
Syed Mahmood	Vice Chairman (until May 2015)	Ilford
Joanne Stevens	Treasurer	Elm Park
Phil Beckinsale	Member	Harrow
Bryan Binning	Member	Greenford
Irene Brockey	Member and (PDRO)	Sunbury
Chad Carress	Member	Croydon
Griff Griffin	Member	Romford
Jim Lowther (AKA John)	Member	Chiswick
George Dryburgh	co-opted Member and (DPAC)	Romford
Chris Carr	co-opted Member	Romford
Raymond Harris	co-opted Member	Southgate
Jackie Pinney	co-opted Member	Southgate
Linda Reynolds	co-opted Member	Elm Park
Jack Weedon (AKA John)	co-opted Member	Ilford

By Appointment:-

Standard Bearer Michael Foster
 Ceremonial Officer Stan Heath
 Parade Marshal Reg Burton
 WS, Met. Central Rep. Janet Salter
 Membership Support Officer, GLD, Sarah Stephenson

Haig House, London Area Office, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA

Email: sstephenson@britishlegion.org.uk

Website: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/greater-london>

Conference Committee

Phil Beckinsale
 Chad Carress
 Bryan Binning
 Griff Griffin
 Ken Sprowles
 David Justice
 Finola Turner