

# HAMPSHIRE LINK

**NOVEMBER 2015** 

**CHARITY NO 219279** 

#### Lest We Forget



On October 14, 1939 the HMS Royal Oak lay at anchor in Scapa Flow. Today she lies as a national war grave in those waters off the Orkney Islands, sunk by a torpedo fired by the German submarine U-47.

Of the crew of 1,234 only 400 survived and Thomas George Godwin was one of the casualties. Tommy came from Westbourne just beyond Hayling Island and was Leading Telegraphist on the Royal Oak.

Tommy had served on HMS St Vincent, HMS Aberdeen, HMS Malaya and when Tommy's parents received what was to be their last message from their son he was attached to an escort ship. It was written in his usual cheerful manner.

Mrs Godwin was visiting Portchester when news of the Royal Oak's fate broke. She tendered sympathy to families of the bereaved. She had considered sending Tommy a card for his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday before deciding to send him a greeting telegram when she arrived home.

In October 1939 The Portsmouth Evening News picked up the story:

'When his birthday arrived however, she was sadly surprised to receive a letter from the Admiralty indicating that he had been lost. But the letter included the word 'husband', so she felt that a mistake had been made. However, later that day the news was confirmed that in fact it was her son that had died on the Royal Oak.

"I had no idea that he was on that ill-fated ship, even when the first letter arrived I knew it must be a mistake, it was addressed to 'the wife of' not 'the mother'. When the second letter came showing the confusion had arisen over the names Goodwin and Godwin, it was clear that my son was one of the victims.

I received the first letter on his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. It felt strange that Dad and I thought that our boy was safe on an escort ship. He is the first casualty from the village and we hope the last, everyone spoke very highly of him."

Members of the HMS Royal Oak Association take an annual memorial trip to the Orkney Islands to lay wreaths over the wreck, there is an annual memorial service at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, a tree at the National Memorial Arboretum, a stone Obelisk in Scapa Flow and Books of Remembrance in Orkney and Basingstoke.

This November Tommy represents all those we have loved and lost. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

This *Hampshire Link* newsletter often extends over ten or twelve pages, due in part to the sheer volume of copy and images we receive from branches and occasionally RBL clubs. This illustrates just how busy many of our members and branches are and we always endeavour to include the material sent to us. Rememberancetide is particularly busy and this month's edition is packed with news of County Conference, golf and rugby competitions and, of course, Poppy Appeal launches and concerts as well as numerous Festivals of Remembrance. We hope you feel this justifies the extra pages.

#### **BRANCH NEWS**

## 'Coppers' swell Poppy Appeal total







Sticking with a winning formula, the Ringwood and District Branch staged their annual Poppy Appeal Concert in the local Parish Church at the end of October. The opening left the audience in no doubt that this was a Royal British Legion event; the National Anthem, Bidgood's Legion March and the entry of the Branch Standard.

The Band of the Hampshire Constabulary were in fine form, once again creating the musical ebb and flow that carried the audience through the Billy Joel to Broadway, Gershwin to military marches and Pavarotti to a patriotic singalong.

It was a beautifully constructed programme, crafted by the band's Director of Music, Major Peter Curtis MBE (Royal Marines) who is also Director of The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood. Part of his musical education included a university course in the Psychology of Performance and this was clearly time well spent and not only did he coax the very best out of the Constabulary's musicians but held the audience in the palm of his hands with his beaming smile, witty banter and total engagement.

"Having paid all our expenses we raised over £600 for the Poppy Appeal'" said Ringwood's Poppy Appeal Organiser Val Aldridge. "The band were excellent and the Director of Music brilliant. We had a very good evening and were well supported; the number attending was up on last year."

## Remembering in Havant

Remembrance can manifest itself in many ways and in Havant those lost in the First and Second World Wars are certainly not forgotten.

On Thursday, October 29 Branch Chairman Dave Argue and his wife Avril toured the three Havant cemeteries and planted 35 crosses on the graves of men from the town lost in those two 20<sup>th</sup> century World Wars.

## Copythorne's 'crafty' women



Left to Right:
Front row: Helen Kinley and
Denise Wiltshire
Second row: Margaret Green
and Brenda Gradidge
Back row: Pauline Amey, Sheila
Watson and Maureen Stone

The creative skills of the women members of the Copythorne & District Branch have been put to good use and, inspired by the 'Knit and Natter' initiatives that abound across the country, they have gathered regularly to knit and crochet in a bid to swell the Poppy Appeal Fund.

For the last few months twenty or more Copythorne ladies have gathered in their Legion Hall and created more than 1,000 knitted or crocheted Poppies which have been sold over the Remembrancetide period.

Sizes, colours and designs vary from individual to individual and when Branch Poppy Appeal Organisers Helen Kinley and Denise Wiltshire displayed the fruits of their labours at a recent 'Thank You Party' the faces of the creators glowed with pride.

Thanks to the generous support of Morrisons Superstore in Calmore, Paultons Park and the local Garden Centre the Poppies were displayed and snapped up by fashion conscious supporters, the home-made Poppies likely to raise in the region of £3,000.

The tiny Copythorne and District Branch hit an end-of-year Poppy Appeal total in excess of £26,000 and believe their knitted and crocheted Poppies will provide the perfect foundation for the new fundraising year. And the ladies? They can't wait to get together again to knit, to crochet and ... yes ... to natter!

Postscript: In the first three days of offering their Poppies at Morrisons, donations topped £4,000.

## Rusks on order in Romsey

The Romsey Branch is doing its best to recruit new, young members or, more accurately, the Branch Treasurer Tristan Pattison has a potential new recruit in his sights. Last month Tristan's wife, Jessica gave birth to a baby girl! Niamh Lyra Pattison (pronounced neeve - it's Irish).

Niamh weighed in at 7lb 6oz and Tristan tells us that mother and the baby are both doing well. On behalf of the Hampshire RBL membership we send Jess, Tristan and Niamh our very best wishes.

## Milford on fundraising drive

At their Poppy Evening on October 24 the Milford on Sea Branch launched an ambitious initiative to raise money for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Their year-long event will see them raffle an i10 Hyundai car, the lucky winner being announced at the Milford on Sea Club in November 2016.

Raffle tickets, priced £5, will be on sale at Branch events throughout the year or money can be paid via <a href="www.virgingiving.co.uk">www.virgingiving.co.uk</a> Alternatively, the branch are happy to receive donations. Further details can be found in the Events Section of this newsletter.

# **COUNTY NEWS**

## Hampshire County Conference

Congratulations must go to Darron Back (Bordon & District) and his County Conference Committee for the smooth running of last month's County Conference. Once again the event was poorly attended with only 13 delegates present, less than a quarter of the Hampshire branches represented.

Unfortunately, ill health prevented our retiring County Patron, Dame Mary Fagan from attending and Conference bade farewell to our very popular County Padre, the Reverend Canon Ray Hubble who introduced his successor, Revd. Mark Christian, to those gathered at the Jubilee Hall.

The guest speaker, mountaineer and adventurer Rhys Jones, explained how he had scaled the highest mountain peaks (including Everest) in all seven continents before the age of 20 and described climbs and expeditions he had led with disabled ex-Service personnel. Not only did he receive generous applause at Conference but subsequent telephone calls and e-mails have acclaimed his presentation.

The business of Conference was conducted smoothly although there are still four vacancies on the County Committee. At the close of the morning cups and trophies were presented to award winning branches and Standard Bearers.

#### **Almonisation**

Branch members regularly ask why local fundraising should be channelled into central welfare funds and are eager to know how the money is spent. Our County Treasurer, Brian Soffe, explains the importance of Almonisation.

Almonisation is the reimbursement of welfare grants paid out by The Royal British Legion centrally, either by other charities or by the contribution of funds held by Branches and Counties. The case assessment is now completed before almonisation. Case assessment is undertaken by trained case workers or qualified staff in the case of complex cases. The process of county almonisation has changed and is now a centralised financial transaction between the Counties/Districts and the Central Grant Unit. It is no longer undertaken by local managers. This enables our beneficiaries to gain contributions from local sources, as well as central funds and empowers Counties/Districts to be part of that, drawing down on resources within their Branches. Currently there is some £28,000,000 held by Counties, Districts and Branches. The Legion must put this large sum to work if the public and our beneficiaries are to sustain their confidence in local branches.

## Christmas cheer

Warsash resident Jane Thakker contacted *Hampshire Link* to suggest that Hampshire replicates a Royal British Legion initiative she was involved with several years ago in North Oxford. Jane's branch provided a lunch on Christmas Day for local lonely elderly people. "I wondered," said Jane, "if that happened here in Hampshire and, if so, whether you needed ad hoc volunteers for the day, to help with preparing and serving the meal." Jane and her husband would prefer to do something helpful on Christmas Day rather than just eat and watch TV! If you can assist them please contact Hampshire Link (01794 323487 or <a href="mailto:ishantsrbl@hotmail.com">ishantsrbl@hotmail.com</a>).

## Pop-In Poppy Fun Day



The Area Pop-In and Information Centre in Southampton threw open its doors in October for its first *Poppy Fun Day*. Children were invited to make Poppies, decorate animal pictures and make paper aeroplanes. While the children cut, glued and pasted, parents were challenged to identify a montage of war film themes and place military ranks into the correct order. There was a steady flow of parents and children throughout the day and Area staff were kept busy supervising their young visitors and encouraging them to have their faces painted. Designed to raise the profile of the Legion in the community, the event was deemed a success.



## Another successful Scramble



Texas Scramble participants gather outside the East Horton Clubhouse after an enjoyable day's competition

The Hampshire RBL Golf Society now regularly holds a four-man team Texas Scramble in the autumn of each year. This is primarily a fun day ending with a few pints and an informal meal.

Once again the weather on October 19 was benign and the 13<sup>th</sup> running of the Scramble was staged on the now excellent and challenging East Horton Greenwood course.

Old Basing teams dominated the entries with four teams and our Golf Secretary, Rick Bourne, was delighted to see a total of 28 players participating.

This included four ladies from Eastleigh, Fawley and a very special four-ball team captained by our County President Brigadier David Harrison.

Old Basing 'UFO'S', captained by Steve Western, won the event with 'Nutters with Putters' finishing 2<sup>nd.</sup> The 'Basing Posse' came third on countback just pipping Fawleys 'Four Pints of Lager'. The winners and runner up teams received a few nice bottles of wine plus some tasty confectionary for their efforts.

The individual prizes were shared out with Jez Smith (Eastleigh) winning the Longest Drive on the  $10^{th}$  and Neil Bennett (Old Basing) taking the Nearest the Pin prize on the  $14^{th}$ , (the second time in three years he has achieved this). Steve Western just got closer than son Nicholas to win the Nearest the Pin in 2 shots on the tricky  $16^{th}$ . During the meal a raffle was organized. £102 was raised for the Poppy Appeal and thanks were extended to all concerned.

#### **POPPY APPEAL**

## Appeal launches across the County

In the last few days there have been a number of Poppy Appeal Concerts and Festivals of Remembrance and Poppy Appeal launches across Hampshire.

Gunwharf Quay played host to the Poppy Appeal launch in Portsmouth. The Royal British Legion Victory Brass Band provided the music, the band playing on despite a short shower of rain.

Parade Marshal Chris Purcell took charge of the ten Standards Bearers and among the young people taking part in the service nine-year-old Ruby Cass (right), whose father is a serving Officer in the Royal Navy, presented the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor Frank Jonas, with the 'first Poppies'.

Once again the presentation of Poppies in Portsmouth will help the memories of those lost in conflicts past and present to 'Live On'.

The Southampton Poppy Launch took place in the West Quay Shopping Centre and members of the Southampton branch were there in force, raising £4,200 in just a few hours. "The day was a great success," says Membership Secretary Archie Parsons, "making it a great start to the Poppy Appeal.

Royal Marines abseiled from the roof amid a hail of tumbling Poppies and two violinists entertained shoppers.

In Winchester the Poppy Appeal launch was linked with the Freedom Parade involving the King's Royal Hussars who are celebrating their 300th anniversary. Community Fund Raiser (North) Dave Moore and Pat Prior represented the County at the RBL stall and during the day £2,100 was raised by Poppy Appeal collectors



## Running for the Poppy Appeal



Legion supporters took part in this year's Great South Run which was held in Portsmouth on Sunday, October 25.

Groups from the Itchen Spitfire running group and HMS Sultan, along with staff members Michael Hart and Ian Jarvis completed the course and helped to swell the Poppy Appeal Fund.



Two HMS Sultan runners, Daniel and Josh, did particularly well, Josh completing the 10 miles in 1:01:24 and Daniel, who has only been running six months, finished in 1.05.00.

If running 10 miles isn't a challenge enough their team-mate Kev (top right) completed the Great South Run with 30KG on his back.

## **REMEMBRANCE**

#### Norman takes a bow

All good things must come to an end and, as he approaches his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the President of Eastleigh, Chandlers Ford & District, Norman Brown has decided that the 2015 Eastleigh Festival of Remembrance will be his last.

Norman has organised the Eastleigh Festival for 20 years and after launching the event at the Eastleigh Leisure Centre it moved to The Point Theatre in 2000. This year's production proved to be as successful as ever.

The Otterbourne Brass played a cavalcade of popular music and was joined shortly before the interval by the Wyvern Chamber Choir from the 11-16 secondary school in Fair Oak. The young ladies presented a refreshing, lively and entertaining programme of music and their enthusiasm was infectious.

Following a Parade of Standards the Remembrance Service was conducted by the Branch Padre, Rt. Rev'd Dr Richard Palmer before Norman Brown closed his final Festival: the man who had done so much over the last two decades saying just a few short, moving words and telling his audience that the Eastleigh Festival would go on, but under 'new management'. Well done Norman and thank you.

(Above right)

Members of Otterbourne Brass bid Norman Brown a fond farewell.





#### **Outstanding Dorset Festival**

The Hampshire RBL Chairman, the County Standard Bearers together with standards from three Hampshire Branches were invited to Christchurch Priory on October 31 for Dorset Royal British Legion's second annual Festival of Remembrance.

The concert, played out to a capacity audience in the beautiful Priory setting, featured musicians, artistes and performances of a remarkably high standard.

The Band of the Royal British Legion, Christchurch was quite amazing, its repertoire extending from the sacred and ceremonial to moving and earth-trembling. Musical Director Nick Jarvis must take credit for a superb musical selection and the overall production of the concert which achieved the highest production values including some specially choreographed routines for the Standard Bearers.

Guest instrumentalist, Denis Cutler, former London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Halle and BBC National Orchestra of Wales has been a tutor at the Royal College and London College of Music and is Professor of Trumpet at the Royal Welsh College of Music. His moving tribute to the sub-mariners of the Royal Navy (Elegy 1944) was warmly applauded.

BBC Choir of the Year finalists *Salvacosta*, a remarkable vocal group led by the talented Darren Bartlett, performed individually and as a group throughout the evening. The highlight was undoubtedly their closing selection from *Le Miserables* which was musical performance at its best.

## Basingstoke Remembers

Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch are staging their Remembrance Parade and Service at the Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke on Sunday, November 8. There will be a Chinook flypast, the Pipe and Drum Band of the Coldstream Guards will lead the Parade and will present a small concert in the marquee after the Service. Anyone wishing to march in the Parade or who requires any further information please contact Bill Sample on 01256 357666 (evenings after 6.00pm please) or at <a href="mailto:wsample@gmail.com">wsample@gmail.com</a>

#### Veteran's lunches

For a number of years the *Miller's Group* restaurants have hosted veteran's Remembrance Lunches on November 11. During the last year this group of high quality country inns has been sold and, with one final exception, the lunches will no longer be available to Hampshire RBL veterans.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank former owner Ashley Levett, his wife and their remarkable team of staff and volunteers for making our members so welcome, so well fed and 'watered' over the last few years.

We are grateful to the new owners of The Anchor Inn at Lower Froyle for offering to honour the previous arrangement for 2015 and there are just a few places remaining for their Veteran's Lunch. If you wish to attend please contact Clare Pepiatt (07919 573770 or <a href="mailto:cpeppiatt@britishlegion.org.uk">cpeppiatt@britishlegion.org.uk</a>) Those attending should arrive at 12.30 for 1.00pm.

#### STANDARD BEARERS

## Carrying our traditions forward

Thanks and congratulations must go to Hampshire County Parade Marshal Steve Forward for the time and trouble he has taken to train Corporals Butterfield and King of 4 Troop, A Company Army Cadet Force in Fleet.

Steve visited the Troop on three occasions and also conducted training for the Cadets in Eastleigh. He is conscious that with the number of Hampshire Standard Bearers diminishing it is important to replenish and replace.

Fleet, Crookham and District Branch now has a young man who can carry the new Branch Standard for, having lost their Standard in a church fire last year, the new Standard will be dedicated at Church Crookham on Remembrance Sunday.

Branch Chairman Bill Tyack has written to the Hampshire Parade Marshal expressing his appreciation, "... not only because the Branch has a new Standard Bearer, but also because it has strengthened the links between the Branch and 4 Troop, AFC."

If the County Parade Marshal or the County can help you in a similar way please contact us through the *Hampshire Link* newsletter.

## **ATIONAL**

## Britain's best kept defence secret

Those disappointed by England's early exit from the IRB Rugby World Cup could so easily have sought consolation from the International Defence Rugby Competition that was also staged throughout October.

Running parallel to and organised on the same basis as the IRB event, the military competition saw teams from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force take on combined services sides from nine countries from the northern and southern hemispheres.

The pool games were played in Aldershot, Portsmouth and at RAF Halton and despite losing narrowly to France in the round-robin games, convincing victories over Australia and Canada saw the British Army progress to the quarter-finals. In Pool B the Royal Navy beat Japan but defeats at the hands of New Zealand and Fiji cost them a place in the quarters. They went on to win the Plate semi-final against Canada and defeated Georgia by 37 points to 7 in the final.







The British Army XV face the French National Military Team at Aldershot en route to the quarter finals





Having lost to Tonga at RAF Halton the Royal Air Force side moved on to beat Georgia and South Africa claiming a quarter-final tie against France but France put the airmen out of the competition in mid-October. At the same stage the British Army overcame South Africa in Aldershot and joined France, Fiji and New Zealand in the semi-finals.

These were played at The Stoop, the home of Harlequins RFC, where Fiji defeated France and the British Army claimed their place in the final beating New Zealand 40-15. On October 29 the Fijians claimed the Arthur Leyland Harrison Trophy with a 30 points to 10 victory over the British Army.

The organisation of the competition was superb, helped along the way by the £50,000 RBL sponsorship; RBL branding, 'Live On' merchandising marquees and branch bucket collectors prominent features at each of the military venues.

Sadly, the free admission event was not widely publicised within the Legion, not promoted to media outlets outside the wire and, consequently, the International Defence Rugby Competition was poorly attended, few witnessing the high quality rugby that was fast, furious and, at times, quite outstanding.

(For further information and images: www.idrc.org.uk/)

## **EVENTS DIARY**

## What's On.....

#### 7 November 2015

RBL Festival of Remembrance Royal Albert Hall, London

#### 8 November 2015

Remembrance Sunday

#### 11 November 2015

Michelmersh Band in Concert (Hosted by Romsey Branch) United Reform Church, Romsey 7.30pm

Further details: Kath Garland 01794 522643



#### MICHELMERSH SILVER BAND





# FOR THE FALLEN A concert of Remembrance

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 7.30 pm

IN THE

UNITED REFORM CHURCH ROMSEY

Tickets: £10 (Concessions £9)

Available from The Heritage and Visitor
Centre, Church Street, Romsey
Tel: 01794 512987



The Farnborough Concert Band of the Royal British Legion

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 At The Royal British Legion Club 7.30pm Raffle and Table Buffets
Tickets £10.00

Members and Non Members Welcome

Tickets available behind the Bar or please call 07767025074



## **LEST WE FORGET**

Our sincere condolences go to the family and friends of these members:

Mr D Adey Lee on the Solent

Mr D Benham Yateley

Mr K Bryant Eastleigh Chandlers Ford & District

Mr D A Coster Romsey
Mr G Jones Romsey
Mr S Mayo Brockenhurst

Mrs B Peat Burley
Mr N Wood Park Gate

# **SEND US YOUR NEWS**

We would like to thank all those that have sent news reports and photographs for inclusion in this month's newsletter. It is very much appreciated. We welcome all news and information from Hampshire branches and work to ensure that it is included in the *Hampshire Link* newsletter. Please forward news (maximum of 250 words please) and pictures to:

jshantsrbl@hotmail.com

ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES TO THE CONTACT CENTRE ON 0808 802 8080