



HAMPSHIRE LINK

JANUARY 1, 2016

We send all members of Hampshire Royal British Legion best wishes for the New Year.

CHARITY NO 219279

Big loss ... big shoes to fill

Our Membership Support Officer, Stephanie Harris (right), will be leaving the Royal British Legion immediately after Christmas. Initially Steph predicted that she would be moving during the summer of 2016 and the news that she was to leave the Legion on January 8 was a real surprise.



Steph started work with TRBL in 1993, working as a 'temp' and finally joining the CDI in Eastleigh in 1999. She was appointed Hampshire County Secretary in 2001 and re-titled Membership Support Officer in 2014. Her job description required her to act as "the membership governance specialist & administrator, supporting and providing guidance to the membership to ensure their business complies with all Legion policies, procedures, and charity law."

Her work has been greatly appreciated, carried out very efficiently and she is widely respected and admired. There were, unfortunately, times when she found herself between a rock and a hard place, required to enforce policies and procedures that were not always popular with the membership. She always insisted on working to the letter of the law, took unpleasantness on the chin and kept smiling. Steph has supported three Legion Managers: Col. Shane Hearn, Catherine Kitchener and Jim France and County Chairmen Bob Knight, Bill Bates and John Smith.

"In February my husband, Matt, leaves the Royal Navy after 28-years' service," writes Steph. "Our family life will change immensely as he will be working abroad but it's also an opportunity for me to put my career on hold and spend some quality time with our two children. I come from a military background so the RBL has always been close to my heart. My great-grandfather, grandfather and father all served in the army, and my mum was the local Poppy Appeal Organiser when I was little. My first real memory of the Legion was sitting at the dining room table with her when I was 6, putting poppies together – they came in three parts, the stem, leaf and flower. It was around that time that my father left the forces and went straight into employment with TRBL, and here I am, working for them 30 years later!"

One of the best things about my job is how many interesting people I've met during my time in the role. We have an amazing team in the Area Office in Southampton and they are a second family to me. I care about them all very much. The volunteers are okay too! Seriously though, I want to thank you all so much for your support. You are an incredible bunch and I have enjoyed my time working with you enormously.

It will be an emotional time when I leave TRBL, but it's time to put my family first and I'm looking forward to spending time with them - I have 15 years to catch up on!"

BRANCH NEWS

Festive fun at Farnborough

The members of the Farnborough branch ended the year with a seasonal flourish, the Farnborough Concert Band of the Royal British Legion providing a lively programme of music at the Christmas Concert in mid-December. Wearing Santa hats and Rudolf antlers they slipped seamlessly from *Sleigh Ride* to *The Sound of Music*, from *Silent Night* to *the Thunder and Lightning Polka*, and took every opportunity to involve their audience in Christmas carols and sing-a-long favourites.



Branch members had adorned the Club function room with Christmas garlands and guests sat around tables seasonally decorated and with trays of Christmas fayre at their centre. The branch committee were well supported, members, family and friends packing the hall for this festive treat. Chairman Steve Gatfield, his wife Jacki and their helpers once again excelled themselves and as the band took their bow following their last number (above right) the members of the Farnborough Branch exchanged Christmas greetings and set off for home in very high spirits at the end of what has been, for the North Hampshire branch, a very good year.

Brighter future for Bramley

Not all branches have found Legion life easy during 2015 and at their AGM in October the Bramley branch failed to raise a committee. Determined not to let the branch die the president and vice-president called a Special General Meeting and set about rustling up more support.

The SGM was well supported, and having stepped down as president, Col. John Ferguson was elected as the new chairman and former vice-president Rhydian Vaughan took on the role of vice chairman. The existing treasurer remained in post and having elected a new branch secretary and three additional committee members the immediate future of Bramley looks secure.

Following the SGM an informal discussion suggested that the new committee intend to make their additional appointments at their first branch meeting, that they are already planning an attractive social programme for 2016 and that they are confident of recruiting new members in the New Year. Bramley Branch has a promising future and is an example to other struggling branches around the county.

Commitment and dedication



The Berthon Company has a long established boatyard on the Lymington River and the Lymington branch secretary Melvyn Cole has been a member of their Dockmasters' team since 1978. In a recent company newsletter Berthon spoke of his involvement with the Royal British Legion, his Poppy Appeal collecting and his commitment during Remembrance Day saying: "His dedication always amazes. It goes without saying that we are all very proud of Melvyn and his work with the Poppy Appeal." Melvyn is also secretary of the Earl Mountbatten Memorial Branch and vice chairman of the Hampshire County Conference Committee and Berthon not only applaud him but all other Poppy Appeal collectors saying: "Their enthusiasm never wanes."

Ceramic Poppies remain popular

Ever active, the Totton and Eling Branch of the Royal British Legion raised a magnificent £400 with help of the students from Testwood Sports College.

They sold ceramic poppies made and painted by the students in their house colours of red, blue, green and yellow along with numerous other items during the town's Lantern Parade which was held on December 6. The branch has strong links with a number of local schools, colleges and youth organisations and these partnerships are continuing to work extremely effectively.



Christmas hats and Remembrance Poppies in Totton

Nothing motivates like a pat on the back

The Aldershot & District Branch secretary, Mick Mills, found time during that busy period before Christmas to drop a line to his branch members to say 'thank you'.

Reflecting on 2015 he commented, "Needless to say you all did very well. I would just like to thank you all for being such a great bunch, supportive in all we do and stand for."

Mick then went on to remind them that there was a pre-Christmas coffee morning ("mince pies, sherry and a lot of festive fun – Christmas hats optional") and ended by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. It's good to feel appreciated. Well done Mick.



COUNTY NEWS

So long, farewell, auf wiedersehen, adieu ...



The departure of Steph Harris on Friday, January 8 leaves something of a void and we would really appreciate the understanding and patience of the Hampshire membership.

The MSO position has been advertised and it is hoped that interviews will be held around mid-January. It could be anything up to three months before the successful candidate joins the team in the Area Office.



During that time there will be no replacement for Steph (no temp or locum) to undertake the MSO's usual duties. Also the Area Administrator, who has a busy workload across Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight, will be unable to field enquiries normally dealt with by the MSO.

For a short period there will, therefore, be little or no support for membership from the Area Office and all branch officers and members must use the National Helpline Freephone (0808 802 8080) where enquiries will be channelled to the most appropriate Legion department. The County Chairman will be working in the Area Office on Wednesdays and Fridays from January 11 to deal with branch enquiries received from the Call Centre and will contact branches at the earliest opportunity.

Temporary arrangements for bereavement notices - please read note in 'Lest We Forget' section.

Message from our Area representative

It has been a busy year across our three counties. There has been much change and more to come.

Our Charity provides an unparalleled service to beneficiaries in our sector. The local fundraising, leading to welfare provision to those in need across our ex-service community, provides the visual impact of our work. The comradeship provided locally within the framework of our Branches, Clubs and Halls is a vital, but perhaps sometime intangible, beneficial output from our Charity.

I know that much of what happens would not do so without the firm leadership that you all provide in your various areas and for that I thank you for your dedication. I have to report to you that my recent nomination to continue in the position of your MC Rep was unopposed. Therefore I was automatically elected to the appointment I currently hold as a co-optee for one year from the National Conference commencing May 22, 2016. I look forward to working with you for my term as your MC Rep until May 2017.

Best Wishes,

Paul Harris QGM
Membership Council Representative
Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight

New Membership Payment Scheme

It was always anticipated that there would be teething troubles during the first year of the new membership payment scheme and for that reason there were regular explanatory articles in National and County newsletters and magazines, numerous letters to club and branch secretaries from the MSO and talks given at National and our own Hampshire County Conference.

The introduction of the new scheme, although not perfect, has gone reasonably well. In mid-December the National Chairman confirmed that 197,000 members had renewed their membership, with a further 8,000 new joiners registered on the system. Thus the total membership stood at 205,000 and in December 56,000 reminder letters and 19,000 emails were sent to members yet to renew. Sadly, a number have decided not to renew their membership and a large number of members are still awaiting their new membership cards. In Hampshire there have been numerous cases of membership renewal forms being filled in incorrectly, bank details not being provided, forms submitted without a signature, cases where members have moved without providing the Legion with change-of-address details and individuals sending a form without a payment.

Every effort is being made to eradicate these difficulties and we are hopeful that the next renewal round will be relatively trouble free.

Dust off those clubs

Golf secretary, Rick Bourne, reports that our Hampshire RBL Golf Society raised £337 at the 2015 Armed Forces Day (Poppy Appeal) event and £404 for the Basingstoke Neonatal Unit. As we step into a new year the dates have been announced for the 2016 Hampshire events. The Hampshire RBL Pairs competition is being held at the Army Golf Club in Aldershot on May 16, the Armed Forces Day competition will take place at the Sherfield course near Basingstoke on June 20 and the Old Basing Golf Day will be held on September 9 at the same venue. The cost of these golf days may be £1 or £2 more than before but don't be discouraged, it remains excellent value, raises lots of money for the Poppy Appeal and is always great fun. Please put these dates in your diary.

Alteration, modification, transformation ...

... variations of the word 'change'.

Army recruits are told "change is the norm", Legion members are aware that change is in the air and many of us accept that change is inevitable, not to be feared and often for the better. Most recently we were introduced to the new National Helpline Freephone (Call Centre) and the new Membership Payment Scheme and 2016 will herald further changes and see a number of overlooked membership requirement and governing regulations addressed.

The Membership Council's new Financial Compliance working group meet regularly to ensure that all branches conform to the financial requirements of the Royal Charter and Management Handbook.

Steps are being taken to identify and contact branches that have not submitted accounts on time, are withholding cash amounts in excess of £5,000 rather than follow the direction of using the BFI account and those who continue to use Common Investment accounts after their use was discouraged in November 2014.

This is being done in order that the Legion complies with the requirements of the Charity Commission and that money languishing in various bank accounts is used to better effect for our beneficiaries. County treasurers have already been asked to reduce the number of their accounts and this must be done by January 31. We can report that the Hampshire County Treasurer has already complied with these requests.

Branch chairmen will soon receive a letter from the Chairman of the Membership Council about similar steps to be taken by branch treasurers with additional direction on the management of social funds. These changes should be introduced in timely fashion to ensure we safeguard the financial integrity of the Royal British Legion and better support the beneficiaries we serve.

Within Hampshire, branches that failed to submit MS1 forms by December 31, 2015, that did not submit their accounts before September 30, 2015 or who have members holding more than one executive position on the branch committee are a major area of concern and will be contacted. Similarly, groups identified as sub-branches for longer than three years will be asked to consider and decide upon their future options.

Alteration, modification and transformation in 2016, designed to make the Royal British Legion a more efficient, effective and charity compliant organisation.

EVENTS DIARY

What's On

13 February 2016

Regional Standard Bearers competition
Bovington Camp, Dorset
Contact: stevemo@stevemo.plus.com

16 May 2016

Hampshire Pairs Golf competition
Army Golf Club, Aldershot
Contact: rbourne@glenair.co.uk

20 June 2016

Armed Forces Day Golf competition
Sherfield Course near Basingstoke
Contact: rbourne@glenair.co.uk

9 September 2016

Old Basing Golf competition
Sherfield Course near Basingstoke
Contact: rbourne@glenair.co.uk

NATIONAL

Freedom Trail



The RBL's Events Coordinator, Madeleine Bowler, is inviting Legion members to participate in an adventure challenge called *The Freedom Trail* (*'Chemin de la liberté'*) which takes place between September 19 - 25, 2016.

The Legion have 25 places to fill on the 4-day trek through the Pyrenees, following one of the toughest World War II escape routes from Nazi-occupied France into Spain, passing memorials of the fallen along the way.

The event has run on a small scale over the last few years but the Legion are now putting much more investment into it and are having all logistics organised by Discover Adventure, a leading charity tour operator. This demanding trek is highly achievable and is being promoted early to give participants plenty of time to train and to fundraise. Anyone interested, or who knows anyone who might be interested, should call Madeleine on 02030 537 045.



A Guide to Accessing the Member Information Website

On the bottom of the Membership renewal letter which delivered your card there is a link to the Member Information Website <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/members/member-information/> This link gives personal access via links to the following information:

1. Membership Self Service.

- a. This link will require you to set up a personal account which is password protected for your data security. To set this up you will need;
 - i. Your Membership Number
 - ii. Date of Birth
 - iii. Email address
 - iv. Your own password
- b. Once set up you will be able to
 - i. View your data held on the welcome tab (opening screen)
 - ii. Change your Personal Details on the Personal Details Tab
 - iii. Transfer Branch on the Transfer Branch tab
 - iv. Select your Payment Preference on the Payment Preference tab
 - v. Log Out on the Log out tab.

2. Legion Magazine

- a. This link gives electronic access to not only the current Magazine but also back copies from June 2012

3. Membership Documents

- a. This page is accessed by using a user login and password common for all members
 - i. Login – memhandbook
 - ii. Password – TRBLmem£86
- b. On successfully logging in this will give access to:
 - i. Membership Hand Book parts 1-4 with an Amendment Control sheet
 - ii. Ceremonial Handbook
 - iii. Branch Accounts current year documentation
 - iv. Elections Current Year National Election Documents
 - v. Policies and Procedures
 - i. Legion Complaints Procedure
 - ii. Code of practice for Branches occupying former retail premises
 - iii. Data Protection Policy
 - iv. Royal British Legion Band Policy
 - v. Membership Training Policy
 - vi. Branch Health and Safety Assessment and guidance
 - vi. Membership Newsletters and Circulars
 - i. Latest Circulars including
 - a. Festival of Remembrance 2015
 - b. Branch Welfare Project
 - vii. Annual Conference
 - i. This page includes all you need to know about the Annual Conference from the Special Circular onwards.
 - viii. Royal Charter
 - i. This page includes a link to the current Royal Charter.
 - ix. Briefings
 - i. This page current includes the corporate message for 2014 but will include the latest ones once delivered at County conferences
 - x. Forms
 - i. This page includes all the Branch forms necessary for the efficient running of a Branch
 - a. Membership form - no longer available online, please use the online joining option or contact Poppy Appeal for printed forms
 - b. Direct debit form - as above
 - c. Membership transfer form
 - d. Form MS1 - Branch Information
 - e. Form MS1A - County/District Information
 - f. Form MS5A - Branch Closure
 - g. Form MS5B - Sub-Branch return to full status
 - h. Form MS5C - Branch Amalgamation

- i. Form MS5D - Branch Name Change
- j. Form MS9 - Branch Formation
- k. Branch Nomination for County/District Chairman
- l. Branch Nomination for County/District Vice-Chairman
- m. Example Ballot Paper for the election of County/District Chairman
- n. Example Ballot Paper for the election of County/District Vice-Chairman

4. Member Offers

- a. This page includes links to:
 - i. Remembrance Travel Discounts
 - ii. Johnson Cleaners
 - iii. Discount Schemes
 - iv. Festival of Remembrance

5. Membership Complaints

- a. This page contains detailed instructions “How to make a Complaint” with all associated documentation

6. Ceremonies and Services

- a. Details of national Ceremonies and a link to your local branch.

LEST WE FORGET

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

Mr J Bogar	Basingstoke & Overton
Mrs J Brash	Headley & District
Mr D Isted	Park Gate
Mr D Kamsler MBE	Basingstoke & Overton
Mr L Morant	Southampton
Mr A Neilson	Romsey
Mr B E Pooley	Fawley
Mr B Russell	Basingstoke & Overton

SPECIAL NOTE

Under normal circumstances the Hampshire & Isle of Wight MSO collects the names of members to be included in our *Lest We Forget* section from branch officers.

Until a new MSO is appointed we ask that names be forwarded to the County Chairman using the e-mail address below. This will ensure the names are included in the next edition of *Hampshire Link*. Thank you.

jshantsrbl@hotmail.com

SEND US YOUR NEWS

We would be delighted to hear from many more Hampshire branches during 2016. If you are organising an event, function or interesting activity, if you have a special person in your branch who deserves some recognition or a pat on the back or if you have some information relating to Legion matters that may well interest others please contact *Hampshire Link*.

Simply send the information to the Area Office or the e-mail address below. Happy New Year.

jshantsrbl@hotmail.com

OR TO: THE HAMPSHIRE LINK EDITOR, ROYAL BRITISH LEGION,
104 ABOVE BAR STREET, SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE, SO14 7DT

ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE CONTACT CENTRE ON

0808 8028080