



HAMPSHIRE LINK

MARCH, 2016

CHARITY NO 219279

A touch of class at The Anvil



One of the finest charity concerts staged in Hampshire in recent years thrilled a packed Anvil Concert Hall in early February.

The Deane Sinfonia, a 70-piece amateur orchestra under the baton of John Fuller, was joined by 180 members of the Basing Singers, Basingstoke Choral Society, Dever Singers, Ooh Mama, Overton Choral Society and the Steventon Singers.

Conductor John Fuller had two very good reasons for organising the concert in aid of the Royal British Legion. "The concert is to raise money for a charity that I have supported over many years, as they do so much good work to assist so many people."

John also dedicated the evening to Legion supporter Corie Mapp, a 36-year-old Army veteran who served in Afghanistan as a Life Guard with The Household Cavalry Regiment. Corie was blown up in 2010 in an IED blast and is a double amputee.

He is now part of the GB Paralympic Bobsleigh and Volleyball teams and plays disabled cricket for Hampshire. He is currently going through training to become a Legion volunteer case worker.

Hampshire's Community Fundraiser (North) Dave Moore worked closely with John Fuller in the organisation of the event and their efforts were justifiably rewarded. Emily Mowbray opened the concert with Max Bruch's *Violin Concerto No.1 in C Minor* before the Sinfonia, accompanied by soprano Sally Silver, Mezzo Soprano Anna Loveday, Tenor Edward Hughes, Bass John Lofthouse and the combined choirs, embarked upon the second half of the programme, a remarkable performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*.

Hampshire's Dave Moore says, "I would like to thank John Fuller and the Deane Sinfonia on a magnificent performance. It was superb concert and was clearly enjoyed by all who attended and raised a fantastic £676.20 for the Royal British Legion."

BRANCH NEWS

NHS breathes new life into Bramley



Bramley chairman John Ferguson (right) and vice chairman Rhydian Vaughan present the certificate to Donna Green, chief nurse at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The Bramley Branch, so close to closure at the turn of the year, is now totally focussed on fundraising in support of our beneficiaries.

At the beginning of February the members acknowledged the help given by the staff and patients at Basingstoke Hospital who helped to raise more than £3,500 for the Poppy Appeal.

During November volunteers from the Bramley branch collected outside the entrance to the hospital for a week while collection boxes were placed in the main restaurant and various departments.

The appeal clearly struck a chord with a grand total of £3,565.16 raised across the hospital. This proved to be the largest amount gathered in one place across the whole of north Hampshire.

To mark the hospital's fundraising efforts, chairman of the Bramley branch, Colonel John Ferguson and vice chairman, Rhydian Vaughan, presented Donna Green, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's chief nurse, with a special certificate.

"We really enjoy coming here and collecting," said Colonel John Ferguson. "Both visitors and staff were really generous when it came to donations. The volunteers receive a warm welcome from all the Hospital staff, who are very generous in their support. The pins we offer as an alternative to the traditional poppy were particularly popular as nurses and doctors can wear them on their uniforms safely."

"The Royal British Legion has been collecting here in Basingstoke for many years and we are only too happy to support and help them in their efforts," Donna Green added. "We have a good number of staff who have served in the Armed Forces and this is an activity that many people want to support."

Tuneful Totton

They've got something to sing about in Totton because the Legion's Totton & Eling Branch are joining forces with Water Aid to put on a "Sing In Spring" evening to raise money for both charities.

They'll be raising their voices at the Totton & Eling Community Centre on Saturday, March 19 at 7.00pm. *Melody Makers* and *Forest Folk* will be providing the music and admission is just £8. By combining the resources of both charities they hope to attract many more people to the event after which they will split the profits 50/50.

"We realised that Water Aid attracted a different group of people to their fundraisers", says Totton Branch treasurer Chris Compton. "It is hoped the new initiative will make more people aware of the work of the Royal British Legion". If the event is successful the plan is to run future events in conjunction with both Water Aid and with other charities and organisations in the Totton & District area.

Farewell to a Boy of the Old Brigade

Bramley Branch have lost stalwart member John Owen who died on February 4 at the age of 90.

Born in Wilmslow, Cheshire in 1926, John joined AV Roe & Company (AVRO) as an engineering apprentice on leaving school. He worked on aeroplanes such as the Avro Anson, Bristol Blenheim and the well-known bomber, the Lancaster.

In September 1945 he joined the Royal Engineers and was posted to Palestine in May 1946. He also served in Singapore and Egypt before joining 16th Bomb Disposal Unit at Newark. It was here he met and married Joan in October 1949.



John Owen meets the Duke of York during a Royal visit to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

After a posting to Gibraltar for 6 months he was discharged from the Army in November 1952 having served for 7 years in the rank of Sapper.

He returned home to Bramley, where he and his wife raised their six children. He worked for Thorneycroft's specialist vehicle manufacturers, Montgomery's Forklifts and then Lansing Bagnall Forklifts, all in Basingstoke, until he retired in 1990.

John was one of the early members of the Bramley branch and served as chairman in the mid 70's.

His passion was Sea-Angling and his claim to fame was catching a very large Common Skate weighing some 117 pounds whilst sea fishing in 1961. He co-founded the Basingstoke Sea Angling Club which is still going strong today.

John lost Joan in 1998 and became a Chelsea Pensioner in December 2002. He died at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and in a moving service at St James' Church, Bramley, the branch were well represented, John's favourite music was played and the Bramley Standard was carried. The Last Post was played at the graveside before he was laid to rest on February 19.

Riders farewell to Andy

Members of the Riders' Branch, representatives of the Petersfield Branch, and the Aldershot Standard Bearer attended the funeral of Riders' member Andy Taylor in February.

The simple and poignant Humanist service included tributes from Andy's daughters, Sabrina and Katie.

Although the Petersfield Branch did not know Andy well, he will be remembered with a minutes silence at their next meeting.



Hitting their targets in Aldershot

Expectations for The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal in Aldershot continues to grow and the volunteer collectors, counters, the military vehicles, the 2nd Aldershot Scout Group, the Aldershot Army Cadets and the local shops, pubs and establishments helped the branch to another great collection in 2015.

The Aldershot & District Branch have an excellent relationship with the Wellington Centre, Tesco, Sainsbury in Ash Road and the Co-op in North Lane, just four of their main manned positions in the town.

They also have Aldershot Town FC on their side and last season the Army Cadets collected either side of a league game and even drew the tickets for the half time draw. Collectors manned their stall at The Wellington Centre every day during Remembrancetide and people even crocheted poppies for sale while manning the stall.

In her February *Poppy Appeal Newsletter* Poppy Appeal Organiser, Caroline Mills, makes an astute observation: "The collection points were adorned with the variety of products that the Poppy Appeal now produces. The Appeal has to keep moving with the times ensuring that people receive something for their donation. Rulers, wristbands and lanyards all proved popular but it is the paper Poppy that still outsells the rest which is good to see".



The manager and staff at the Princes Hall placed Poppies throughout the town, the bandstand, the lamp posts and sign posts all adorned with Poppies. There were collections at Aldershot Railway Station and at Cineworld volunteers were given free ice cream as thanks for collecting. The Queen Hotel (Wetherspoons) and Milano Pizza have "All Year Round Poppy Boxes" and the local schools are also extremely active.

In 2014-15 the Aldershot & District Branch placed 289 collecting pots in pubs, shops and businesses and together with all their other fundraising efforts raised £36,088.86. It's a difficult total to beat this year ... but ... the branch has already banked a fantastic £38,861.11 for the 2015/16 Poppy Appeal, £2,772.25 up on last year, an increase of approx. 8% and the money is still coming in.



Gift aid contributions have carried them over £39,000, an amazing achievement for a small branch and they are working now to top the £40k mark.

There is a real air of optimism in Aldershot and PAO Caroline Mills is in no doubt who is responsible for the upsurge.

"Without our team of collectors, counters and delivery volunteers we would not be able to achieve all that the Aldershot Poppy Appeal does. You are there in all weathers, all times of the day and for hours on end. We would like to say thank you all for your efforts during the 2015 appeal."

The activities in Aldershot may strike a chord with many branches but if not, why not be inspired by the activities in the Garrison Town and set your own new Poppy Appeal target.

Care and compassion

In early January the National Helpline Freephone (the Legion's Call Centre) received a call from a lady who ran a letting agency. One of her tenants had passed away, leaving no next of kin or family. A huge stack of memorabilia in his house suggested he was ex-Service; a red beret, badges and a large number of photographs of the veteran standing on Remembrance Day.

The caller gave the date of the funeral but pointed out the veteran would be having a poor funeral with no church service and asked if someone from the Legion could attend the funeral.

The County Chairman contacted the nearest branch and discovered the man was not known to them. Without prompting the branch official volunteered to represent the Legion at the graveside and offered the services of the branch Standard Bearer if it was discovered that the deceased was a Legion member.

When the caller was informed of these arrangements she started weeping and expressed surprise that the Royal British Legion provided such support for a fallen comrade. We will not identify the branch or the official concerned but they are typical of those across Hampshire that offer similar sympathy and support when needed.

Farnborough Branch were recently thanked for the effort made on behalf of an ex-Serviceman's family at a funeral and particular thanks were extended to the branch Standard Bearer and the bugler provided by RAF Odiham. Our thanks go to all Hampshire Standard Bearers who assist the bereaved in this way and all who find or serve as buglers at funerals.

COUNTY NEWS

MSO update

Following interviews on February 2 for a new Membership Support Officer, the successful candidate for the post has now decided to decline the offer for personal reasons. This will mean that the position will now be re-advertised and Area Manager, Jim France, is anticipating that a new round of interviews will take place at the end of March.

Further to the comment we made in the February edition of the Hampshire Link it may be some time before the successful candidate is announced and in post and therefore members are once again asked to direct all Hampshire enquiries through the National Helpline Freephone:

0808 802 8080

MAGS

In the February edition of *Hampshire Link* we included information about grants awarded to beneficiaries across Hampshire. The chart listed a number of grant categories including one headed 'MAGS'. It has been suggested that this needs a little further explanation which we are now happy to provide.

MAGS are Maintenance Annuity Grants received from Regimental Associations and take the form of pension top ups granted to widows and widowers.

EVENTS DIARY

What's On.....

13 March 2016

More Miller Magic
The Astor Big Band
The Kings Theatre, Southsea at 2.30pm
In aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal
Contact: 02392 828282

19 March 2016

'Sing In Spring'
With the Melody Makers & the Forest Folk
Totton & Eling Community Centre
At 7.00pm
Admission: £8
Contact: 02380 873143

21 April 2016

Beacon Lighting in Southampton
To commemorate HM Queen's actual 90th
birthday
Beneath the Bargate
Details: To be confirmed

21/22 May 2016

RBL 2016 National Conference
Eastbourne Conference Centre

11 June 2016

Garden Party
To commemorate HM Queen's official 90th
birthday
Palmerston Park, Southampton
Details: To be confirmed

20 June 2016

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

14 August 2016

Hampshire Standard Bearers competition
Jubilee Hall, Bishops Waltham
Contact: stevemo@stevemo.plus.com

4 September 2016

Earl Mountbatten Memorial Service
Organised by the Earl Mountbatten Memorial
Branch
Romsey Abbey
Contact: melvyncole54@yahoo.co.uk

9 September 2016

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

15 October 2016

Hampshire County Conference
Jubilee Hall, Bishops Waltham
Contact:
bordondistrict.secretary@rbl.community

29 October 2016

Hampshire County Poppy Launch
Princess Mead, Farnborough
Details: To be confirmed
Contact: dmoore@britishlegion.org.uk

13 November 2016

Remembrance Sunday

The Astor Big Band Presents

More
Miller
Magic



A host of **Glenn Miller's No.1 Hits**, including *In the Mood*, *Tuxedo Junction*, *American Patrol*, *Serenade in Blue*.

Plus the Big Band hits of **Frank Sinatra**, **Bing Crosby** and **The Andrews Sisters**.

And songs from West End musicals including *West Side Story* and *Les Miserables*, all in the **unmistakable Glenn Miller Style**.

Also featuring our vocal group and strictly miller dancers
From The Royal Beach Tea Dance Group



KINGS PORTSMOUTH
THEATRE

Sunday 13th March 2.30pm

Box Office: 023 9282 82 82
www.kingsportsmouth.co.uk

All of Astor Big Band's profits plus a collection made at this performance will be donated to the Royal British Legion Poppy

IN SUPPORT OF

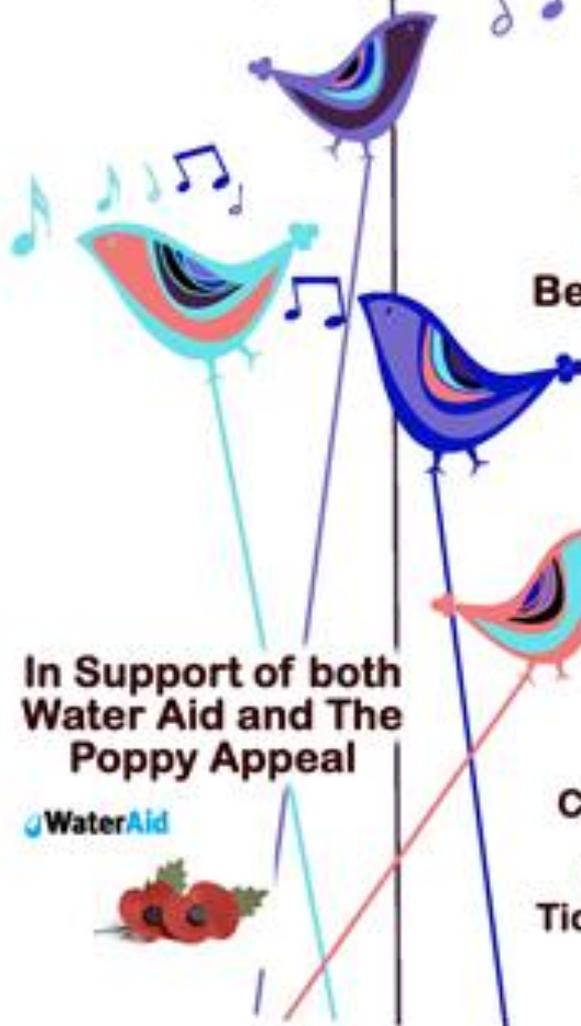


Sing in Spring



Totton & Eling
Community Centre
Saturday 19th March
2016 starting at 7pm

An Evening of song
with the
'Melody Makers'
and
'Forest Folk'



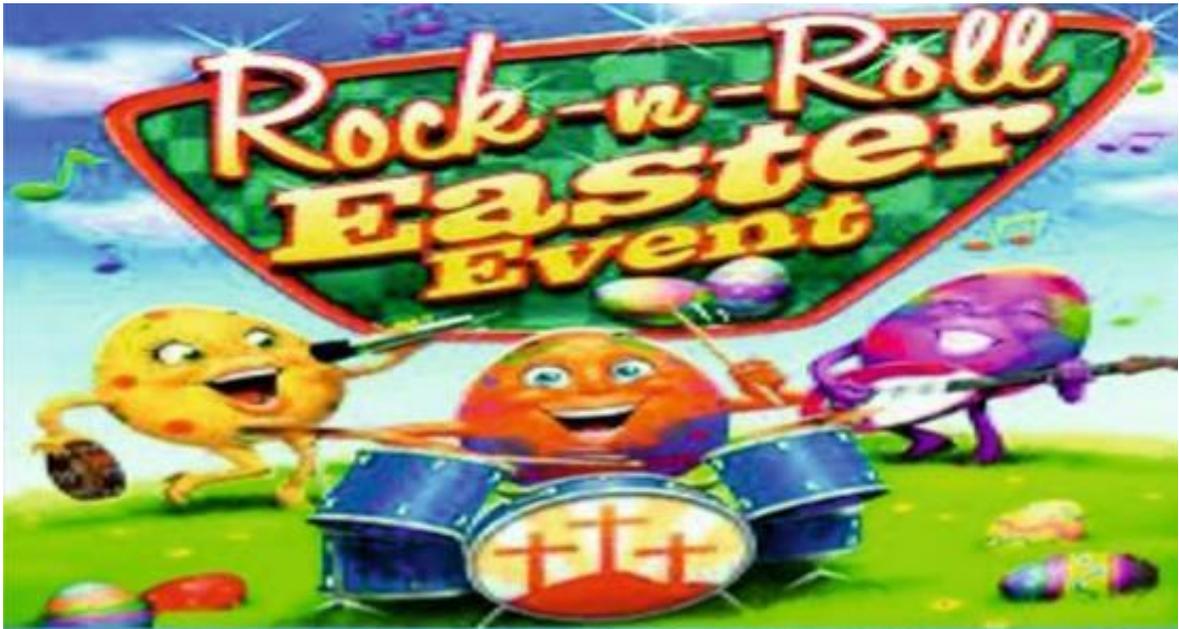
The Evening includes
Spring Quiz,
Best Spring Hat competition,
Raffle Prizes,
Sing Along,
Buffet and Drinks.

In Support of both
Water Aid and The
Poppy Appeal

 WaterAid



Tickets £8 each.
Available now from
Chris/Susan 02380 873143
or Email:
ticket@compark.co.uk.
Tickets available on the door.



Good Friday



The Catfish Kings



**Easter
Saturday**

**Tickets: £8:00 Members
£10:00 Non Members**

STANDARD BEARERS

Standard Bearer's dates

Branch Officers are asked to encourage their Standard Bearer to attend at least one Standard Bearer's School during 2016. The schools are held monthly at Eastleigh and Lymington. Disappointingly, from over 60 Branches only three or four individuals attend each session and our County Parade Marshal, Steve Forward, would certainly welcome more.

Sunday, March 13	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, March 14	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm
Sunday, April 10	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, April 11	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm
Sunday, May 8	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, May 9	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm
Sunday, June 12	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, June 13	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm

Steve satisfies all requests for Standard Bearers with a very limited pool of carriers to call upon. It is hoped that more individuals will make themselves available when help is required.

Regional Standard Bearers Competition

Five County Standard Bearers contested the South West Regional Standard Bearers Competition at Bovington Camp on Saturday, February 13.

Hampshire County Standard Bearer, David Graham, competed against representatives from Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire in what proved to be an extremely close fought competition.

The event was organised by Dorset County and Hampshire's County Parade Marshal, Steve Forward, acted as Positioning Marshal, his quiet, calming manner putting the competitors at their ease before the Drills.

David scored well in the Inspection but following an over vigorous return from the dip, high flying tassels settled like maypole tapes around the pole and this soured an otherwise impeccable series of Drills. It came as little surprise that Cornwall Standard Bearer, Tony Vidler, reclaimed his regional title, with Bob Curry from Somerset finishing second. There was little to separate the remaining three competitors and David Graham was finally placed fourth.

NATIONAL

New National President announced

The Royal British Legion has announced that Air Marshal David Walker CB CBE AFC MA RAF (Retd) will succeed Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CB CVO as National President in May. Air Marshal Walker completed his 34-year career as Deputy Commander of NATO Joint Forces Command. His three year term of office will begin as the Legion's Eastbourne Conference draws to its close on May 22.

Message from Director General

This message was recently sent to all County Chairman on behalf of Chris Simpkins, Director General.

Dear Colleagues,

You may have already learned from the earlier announcement on our intranet, that I have decided that it is time for me to move on from The Legion. It is never an easy decision to take and to get the timing exactly right to step down. But after almost 9 years as your Director General and, as we come to the end of our current 5 year plan, Pathway for Growth, it feels that it would be a great opportunity for a new Director General to take the reins. Especially, whilst they will still have a chance to shape the thinking and implementation of the next strategy.

It will take a while for the recruitment process to be concluded, and so I intend to be in post up to that point to ensure a smooth transition is made. There will be plenty of time to say our farewells later on but until then I have every intention of continuing business as usual and I'm sure you will all support me the same way that you do today.

As always, we will be sure to keep you updated with news of my successor later in the year as progress is made.

Postscript

It is with considerable regret that I have decided to resign as Hampshire County Chairman.

My decision was made following a very long and unpleasant meeting with a small group who were seeking my resignation. The very personal attacks on my character made it clear that my position was untenable.

I have enjoyed the demands and challenges of the chairmanship, hoping to engage with all Hampshire branches and eager to raise standards. I have not enjoyed the hostility but will continue to serve the Royal British Legion in any way I can. I will certainly not forget the support, kindness and friendship shown to me by the vast majority of Legion members across the County of Hampshire.

Hampshire Royal British Legion will soon be seeking nominations for a new chairman and vice chairman and, as I will now be unable to continue in my role as compiler of this newsletter, it may wish to find a new *Hampshire Link* editor. Reflecting on the wide range of activities that are organised across the County and the good practice displayed by branches is both enjoyable and interesting. Anyone interested in producing future editions should contact the Area Office as soon as possible.

Incidentally, there is the possibility that the Area staff may produce an Area Newsletter to be sent directly to Members rather than via Branches. This is not intended to replace already existing County newsletters but rather to supplement them with news from the Area team.

John Smith

LEST WE FORGET

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

Mrs E Brown

Eastleigh, Chandlers Ford & District

Mr J Owen

Bramley

Mr A Taylor

Hampshire Riders' Branch