



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION ESSEX COUNTY



*'Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.'
(Henry Ford)*

OCT 2019

FROM COUNTY OFFICE

QUARTERLY ALMONISATION

The County Committee, through its Board of Management, agreed to donate the sum of £14,071.74 from the County Welfare Fund towards expenditure on beneficiaries in Essex.
This equates to 30% of the total expenditure in the 4th Quarter of 2018.

MS1

In accordance with the Membership Handbook, The Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) must be held within two months of the close of the Corporate Financial Year, i.e. between 1 October and 30 November each year.

Please make sure that the MS1 form is completed and signed after this meeting and returned to us no later than the deadline of the **31st December 2018**.

APPOINTMENT OF THE NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to announce that the Board of Trustees have just decided as of this morning to appoint Joe Falzon as the National Vice Chairman. Joe has been a Trustee at RBL for 5 years. Please cascade to your members and colleagues.

CLARIFICATION ON BRANCH VICE CHAIRMAN

At Annual Conference in 2018 it was decided that the office of Branch Vice Chairman will now be an optional office and that there will be no minimum number of Branch Committee members. Branches with no Vice Chairman are therefore fully eligible and retain their voting rights subjects to timely submission of accounts and MS1 form.

We have now received an amendment.

The Board of Trustees approved the first part of the motion about the Branch Vice-Chairman. However, due to the requirement of a transparent branch governance, the minimum number of committee members required remains and therefore the announcement should read:
Annual Conference in 2018 decided that the office of Branch Vice Chairman will now be an optional office. Branches with no Vice Chairman are therefore fully eligible and retain their voting rights subjects to timely submission of accounts and MS1 form. There is still a requirement to elect at least three committee members in addition to Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to ensure proper governance structure.

ESSEX ANNUAL COUNTY CONFERENCE 2020

The 98th Essex Annual Meeting of the County Conference will be held on Saturday 11th January 2020.

Venue: Tilbury Cruise Terminal, Tilbury Docks, Ferry Rd, Tilbury, RM18 7EH.

To be entitled to send a delegate/s branches must have submitted:

MS1 Form by the 31st December 2018

Annual Accounts on or before the 30th September 2019

Please note that in order to send a branch delegate to the 2020 County Conference you must return your Delegate Nomination Form by 6th December.

Branches whose Paid Up Membership and Life Membership does not exceed 300 shall be entitled to send one Delegate to the County Annual Meeting of Conference. Branches whose Paid Up Membership and Life Membership is 301 or more shall be entitled to send 2 Delegates.

However, we welcome visitors and if you have additional members wanting to come please just send us an email with their names and we will add them to the visitor list.

FROM THE EDITOR

Items for inclusion in the County Newsletter should arrive with me by the 15th of the month to ensure inclusion in the current edition. Items should be sent in **WORD** documents and pictures as Jpgs or Tiffs.

Items can be emailed directly to me to, Shirley Ratcliffe, at the following address: rblcoggeshall@btinternet.com or sent to the MSOs. **Please get permission to use their picture from anyone that you photograph for any article that you send to County Newsletter.**

FROM COUNTY OFFICE

PROPOSED DATES FOR THE 2020 STANDARD BEARERS SCHOOL TO BE HELD AT WITHAM RBL

Saturday 22nd February (Casual Dress)	Saturday 18th July (Casual Dress)
Saturday 21st March (Casual Dress)	Saturday 15th August (Casual Dress)
Saturday 18th April (Full Kit Inspection)	Saturday 19th September (Pass out Parade)
Saturday 16th may (Casual Dress)	Saturday 17th October (Competition)
Saturday 20th June (Casual Dress)	



FROM THE BRANCHES

CHELMSFORD

Simon Beer, Chelmsford Branch's new PAO and Elaine Swann helped to man a stall at Chelmsford City Miniature Railway on Sunday 6th October.

The organiser of the event very generously donated £ 761.89, which was all ticket and NAAFI sales on the day, to the Poppy Appeal and with the donations taken on the stall of £274.71 the grand total raised was a fantastic £ 1036.60



GRAYS THURROCK

Thursday 19th September 2019 was a day of celebration and mutual collaboration between The Grays Thurrock Branch of The Royal British Legion and The Hathaway Academy as the Royal British Legion have formally adopted The Academy through an "Agreement of Affiliation".

The Hathaway Academy, under the guidance of the Principal, Fatima Rodrigues and the Principal's PA Dianne Whippey, have been admirably supporting The Poppy Appeal for more than a decade with the Academy winning the Senior Schools "Albert Lawrence Trophy" for the past 15 years. The trophy is awarded to the senior school having raised the most donations for The Poppy Appeal.

Fatima Rodrigues said, " We are proud to be working together with the RBL and we are currently working on our display of Poppies for the Academy, which are made from recycled plastic bottles. This is just part of what we do to make our students aware of Remembrance and to help them develop their social and civic skills, which are essential for entering into the job market."

Rod Oakley Branch Chairman said, "It was very rewarding to visit Fatima and Dianne today, they have done an enormous amount of work for The Poppy Appeal over the past decade. This "Agreement of Affiliation" is a just reward for their efforts and we will be very happy going forward to maintain the links we have formed with The Hathaway Academy.





FROM THE BRANCHES

LEIGH ON SEA

OBITUARY

I think you all know by now that sadly, our most senior Member and WW1 Normandy Veteran Charles Benford passed away peacefully on 25th July, just 13 days after celebrating his 100th Birthday with a party at the Admiral Court Care Home in Leigh-on-Sea.

His funeral consisting of a Requiem Mass held at Charles' Church, St James the Great in Elmsleigh Drive followed by a Committal service at Southend Crematorium was attended by many Branch Members and 11 Standards from other RBL Branches in Essex together with various other Standards from other Veteran's Associations.

Branch Members formed a Guard of Honour at the Crematorium and his daughter Sandra Lane subsequently wrote a note which read:

Just a few words to thank everybody for taking the time to attend my Father's funeral making it a very memorable celebration of his life. Thank You.



TRIP TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

On Monday 2nd September, a group of Branch Members – and one or two guests, were able to see the inner workings of the Houses of Parliament through a tour organised through the office of our Patron, Sir David Amess.

We were joined on the tour by TRBL Essex County Chairman, Major David Swann and his wife Georgina. As you know, there are lots of things going on at Westminster at the moment – but thankfully everything was reasonably quiet at the time of our visit and thanks to a very knowledgeable guide, we all had an enjoyable day out.

POPPY BUS

The Mayor of Southend, Councillor John Lamb, accompanied by the Mayoress Mrs Pat Lamb, "christened" an Arriva Poppy Bus in the name of our former member and local hero Charles Benford, a Normandy Veteran, who sadly died in July almost 2 weeks after celebrating his 100th Birthday.



The unveiling was attended by Charles' family together with many Branch Members as well as Councillor Jill Healey, Chairman of Leigh Town Council and Dudley Naslund, Deputy Chairman of the Essex Royal British Legion.



Our Branch is indebted to the Southend Arriva team for their magnificent effort and assistance in providing the bus and artwork, which will highlight the forthcoming period of Remembrance. As well as his name, there are also small panels outside and inside the bus, which will operate on routes 1 & 29, highlighting the life and career of Charles.



COGGESHALL & DISTRICT

Sally Pringle, an English lady living in Alicante, Spain contacted the RBL help-line a few weeks ago with an out of the ordinary request. She had in her possession two Death Plaques, known as 'Death Pennies' which had been sent to the Gomer family at the end of the Great War as they had lost two sons.



The family were living in Coggeshall and the two men, Robert and Frederick Thomas, had both volunteered for service overseas. Robert, the eldest son, joined 1st Battalion Essex Regiment and went with them in April 1915 to take part in the Gallipoli campaign.

Robert was killed in action on 6th August 1915, aged 21 and his records state 'presumed dead'. He is buried at Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery including 142 officers and men of the 1st Essex who died on 6th August 1915. Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery is in the Helles area, about 1 kilometre south-west of the village of Krithia, Turkey.

His brother Frederick Thomas was younger by about six years and he enlisted in Braintree and was sent to join 1st/6th Battalion (Territorial) Northumberland Fusiliers. His medal roll indicates that he probably went to France as a battle casualty replacement after 1915. They went to France in April 1915 taking part in the Second Battle of Ypres, the Battle of the Somme in 1916, the Arras Offensive and the Second Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. In 1918 it again saw action on the Somme and Battles of the Lys and Hindenburg Line. Frederick died on 4th October 1918, age 19. The annotation 'died' and not 'died of wounds' indicates that he probably succumbed to a fatal illness. He is buried in Glageon Communal Cemetery Extension about 3 kilometres west of Trelon.

The plaques eventually had ended up in the possession of the youngest son in the family, John William Gomer, who was her step-father. John was born in Coggeshall and was a teacher all his life, apart from service in the RAF during World War Two. He ended his career as the well-respected and well-loved Headmaster at the school in Essex where he remained until his retirement in 1974. Sadly, Dorothy, his wife of 30 years, died in 1973 when they lived in Loughton. Dorothy was also a teacher and during her time at Waltham Cross Primary School had become firm friends with Sally's mother. In 1975 John married his late wife's good friend and they continued to live in Essex, moving to Chingford.

Family circumstances involved a move to Southsea then in the 1980s the couple started to make regular visits to Spain and later a permanent move there. John died peacefully in Spain on 15th February 1994.

The message about the plaques arrived with Victoria, one of the MSOs, who passed it on to Malcolm Ratcliffe knowing that he and Shirley had produced a Roll of Honour for Coggeshall with a page for each man on the war memorial. Shirley is the volunteer curator at Coggeshall's small museum and the museum was very happy to give a home to these two pieces of memorabilia that belonged to two Coggeshall 'boys'. Sally was delighted that the museum would house the plaques and treasure them for future generations and to hear that on Remembrance Sunday and on 11th November their names are read out during the reading of the Roll of Honour. During her research Shirley found out that she was related to the Gomer family on her maternal side so was pleased that she was able to fill in for Sally some of the details of Robert and Fred.

If readers would like to read about Robert and Fred their pages can be found on the museum's website, www.coggeshallmuseum.org.uk or visit the museum in the Spring to see the plaques on display and see the entries in the Roll of Honour.





WOMEN'S SECTION COUNTY STANDARD LAYING UP CEREMONY



On Sunday 15th September 2019 at 3 pm at the United Reform Church, Hatfield Heath, members of the Royal British Legion, both men and women, along with friends and families gathered for the service of laying up of the Women's Section County Standard and the interment of the cremated remains of standards from ten other Women's Section branches from Essex and Suffolk.

The service was attended by the County President Essex RBL, Bob Villa and the County President of the Essex RBL Women's

Section, Sonia Coode-Adams, as well as the County Chairman David Swann and the County vice-Chairman Dudley Naslund. There was a good attendance from both members of the RBL and the Women's Section.

Seven branch standards were in attendance. The County Standard Women's Section was escorted to the chancel steps and the Act of Remembrance took place. Following a hymn the County President of the Women's Section, Mrs Coode-Adams, took the standard and handed it to the minister, the Revd Blair Kirkby, committing it to the safe keeping of the church.

The Rev. Tony Rose, formerly the chaplain to the Royal British Legion Essex, gave an address. After the singing of "I vow to thee my Country" the Rev. Kirkby gave the blessing which was followed by the National Anthem.



The Standard Bearers and the congregation left the church and made their way to the churchyard for the interment of the cremated remains of ten standards of the Women's Section, Royal British Legion .



The ashes of the Women's Section standards of High Ongar & District, Harlow New Town, Great Bentley, Leigh-on-Sea, Southminster, Elmstead & District, Walton on the Naze, Lakenham, Westacre & District and Mattishall & District which had been cremated on the previous day in the churchyard and placed in a casket were received by the minister and committed to the earth with a blessing. Sprigs of rosemary, a flower for remembrance, were placed around the casket by Mrs Coode-Adams and members of the congregation.

After the committal all were welcomed to the church hall for tea and refreshments.





THE CENTRAL BAND OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION 'Christmas Spectacular'

Saturday 7 December - 7pm

A night of seasonal music to include well known Christmas classics to modern day festive swing by composers such as Burt Bacharach

Conducted by **Captain David Cole**

Tickets £22.50, £16, £10 available from Ely Cathedral Box Office 01353 660349 and online at www.elycathedral.org

THE CENTRAL BAND
of THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION 