



RBL ROYAL
BRITISH
LEGION



RUSHDEN

Website <https://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/rushden/>

RBL RUSHDEN BRANCH NEWSLETTER - MAY 2025

VE DAY 80 – 8TH MAY 2025 CELEBRATION & COMMEMORATION:



There will be celebrations and commemorations up and down the width and breadth of the UK on Thursday 8th May 2025, which, surprisingly, has not been designated as a public holiday. That will not stop many businesses and organisations doing their own thing to celebrate and remember those who gave us our freedoms we enjoy today.

Rushden Town Council is not an exception and along with the military community, the following programme has been drawn up:

0900 hrs: Nationwide raising of VE Day Flag at Rushden War Memorial. All Branch Standards will be present. All are welcome to attend this brief ceremony, which is also open to the public. Wreaths will be laid.

0901 hrs: VE Day Tribute

0905 hrs: Exhortation, Last Post, 2 Minutes Silence, Reveille Kohima Epitaph

0910 hrs: Wreath Laying, Lighting Lamp of Peace & Candles Given to Attendees

1930 hrs: Tea Party in Rushden Hall Park/Street Party Picnics

2000 hrs: Music from the period by the Mission Band

2110 hrs: Standards Presented, Welcome Address by Mayor of Rushden, Events History by RBL Rushden Branch President David Hawker, Readings and Prayers, Exhortation, Last Post, 2 Minutes Silence, Reveille Kohima Epitaph and The Tribute by Deputy Lord Lieutenant

2130 hrs: Beacon Lighting

It is likely there will be street parties around the town, hence the gap from 9am to 7pm.

TELL US OF YOUR RELATIVES VJ DAY EXPERIENCES

As we approach the 80th anniversary of VJ Day on 15th August 2025, Branch Members are invited to share personal stories, memories, or photographs of relatives who played a role in this historic moment. Whether they served on the front line, supported the war effort at home, or witnessed the celebrations, these stories will help bring the anniversary to life. Please email the Secretary Lynne Baker at Rushden.secretary@rbl.community or phone Chairman Jake Baker on **07525 441267**.

RBL HELPLINE – 0808 802 8080 - CALL 8am to 8pm 7 DAYS A WEEK

BRANCH SOCIALS ON THE 9TH AND 10TH JUNE 2025

Whilst we will still have our Branch Social commencing 7pm on Monday 9th June 2025 at the Athletic Club, there will be no minute taking or anything like that, but just a social gathering; there will also be light refreshments and a Raffle.

The Branch Committee learned that the RAF Association are to have their Branch Social at the same venue, but a day later than we originally planned, so they have decided, and the RAF Association has kindly agreed, that we should hold a joint Barbeque event at John White Golf Club with the RAF Association on Tuesday 10th June 2025. The Bar will be open from 6pm and food ready about an hour later. Members of the Members' Community Fund voted that Branch Members will pay £4.50 per head, and non-members £10 a head. Our invitation is extended to other organisations such as the RNA and that remains unchanged.

Members who wish to attend are asked to bring the exact money at the next Monthly Branch Meeting, which is on 12th May 2025, and notify any dietary requirements. The menu is Butchers Lincolnshire Sausages, Prime Beef Burgers, Marinated Chicken Pieces, Green Salad, Coleslaw and Potato Salad. Fresh Rolls and Wraps will also be available. There will also be Vegetarian Burgers.

There will also be a Raffle on the night.

FRENCH RESISTANCE AT THE CITROEN FACTORY DURING WWII

During World War II, when Nazi Germany occupied France in 1940, the Citroën factory was forced to build trucks for the German military. But the French weren't going down without a quiet fight. Instead of explosives or open rebellion, they used something far sneakier: a dipstick.

Pierre-Jules Boulanger, the head of Citroën at the time, came up with a clever act of sabotage. He ordered the oil dipsticks in the trucks to be subtly altered — the "full" line was lowered just enough to make it seem like the oil level was fine, even when it wasn't.

What happened next? The trucks would run out of oil under pressure, engines would seize, and German supply lines would stall. 🌟 But no one could point a finger — it looked like a simple mechanical failure.

No drama, no explosions — just a quiet act of resistance, hidden in plain sight. This was brilliance disguised as compliance. And a perfect reminder: not all heroes make noise. Sometimes, they just mess with the dipstick.



THE EIFFEL TOWER DURING WWII

Adolf Hitler visited Paris on the day after France had signed the armistice. He admired the city's architecture and visited places of interest. He was not able to go on the Eiffel Tower, because the French had severed the lift cables just before the German invasion. There was a 'miraculous' repair at the end of WWII.

HOW FRANCE'S CHAMPAGNE MAKERS FOOLED NAZIS — AND HELPED TURN THE TIDE OF WWII – extracts from the New York Post

Next time you raise a glass of bubbly, you may want to consider raising one to the Champagne makers themselves. Moët & Chandon. Taittinger. They are among the most well-known brands in the world, but what's not as well-known is their role during World War II. These producers in France's Champagne region helped turn the tide of the war.

This tumultuous time period serves as the backdrop for the novel, "[The Winemaker's Wife](#)" (Gallery Books) by Kristin Harmel. It's a historical thriller about two women whose husbands operate a champagne house. Their lives are upended by the German invasion, leaving them facing difficult choices and mortal danger.

The book begins in May 1940, the same month German troops rolled into France. The Nazis set about looting almost anything of value, including art, gold and, in the country's wine-producing regions, drink.

The Germans saw consuming the bottles as a way to flaunt their victory, and many of the top Nazi officers were wine aficionados. Hermann Göring, the powerful military commander, and Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister, were both wine collectors. Adolf Hitler himself did not drink, but that didn't stop him from amassing a dazzling array of a half-million vintage bottles as trophies at his Eagle's Nest fortress in Germany.

France's cellars were quickly ransacked, with soldiers appearing and demanding the house's best bottles. In the first few weeks of the German occupation, soldiers stole more than 2 million bottles from winemakers in the Champagne region.

When the clever winemakers were told to produce an impossible amount and work on Sundays, they soon found ways to stick it to the Germans, including hiding their best bottles behind secret walls in their cellars or mislabelling bottles — slapping the best vintages, such as the 1928, with a "poison" label, or passing off their worst with a label indicating better ones.

Residents of the area also took more active forms of resistance. They hid arms and Allied soldiers in their cellars. Many Jews, too, took refuge there. Here's another little-known piece of trivia: The war in Europe officially ended in Champagne. General Dwight Eisenhower had his Headquarters in Reims, and it was there, on 7th May 1945, that the Germans signed the surrender papers. A more public ceremony the next day in Berlin is now commemorated as VE Day, but the war ended in France.

It's a fitting tribute to the people of Champagne, who creatively resisted the occupation in ways both big and small.

ASPIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME 2025

The 2025 Aspire Leadership Programme has been launched, which is now open to **all members** to apply. The programme is designed to develop and equip leaders in-waiting who may, in the future, be elected to leadership positions such as Branch and County Officers, Membership Council or even Trustee!

The programme aims to support and equip participants with the skills and development required for a leadership position. Applications are welcome from members of the Branch.

If you aspire to be a leader in the future, then please apply contact any Committee Member; applications close at 5pm on 16th May 2025. Queries can be emailed to the Learning and Development team at L&D@britishlegion.org.uk

BRANCH DAY TRIP TO ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST TO SEE THE COMMANDANT'S PARADE ON 7TH AUGUST 2025

The Sovereign's Parade marks the end of an Officer Cadet's time at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as they are commissioned into the British Army and many overseas armies. This special parade is a closed event for friends and family of those successfully Commissioning from the 44-week course and takes place three times a year.

However, two days beforehand, the Academy hosts a full rehearsal, known as the Commandant's Parade. Members of the public can attend this parade exclusively through the Sandhurst Trust.

Committee Member Sally Morton's son has kindly offered to meet us there and provide some commentary on the event.

Tickets will cost £20 plus added transport costs, probably of a similar amount. If members are interested in attending, please email Lynne Baker, Branch Secretary at rushden.secretary@rbl.community or inform her or any Committee Member by close of the next Branch Monthly Meeting which is on 12th May 2025.

MY FOUR WEEKS IN CYPRUS – by Branch Member David Robinson

In February 2025, together with a group of other people, I took a **Just Go!** holiday to Cyprus. I flew to Paphos, for four weeks at a cost of a fair sum of £1,600; three weeks were paid for and one week was free. I had to fly from Manchester Airport to avoid paying for the single supplement. Luckily my brother Brian drove me up to the airport to also avoid a three-hour train journey. It was a late evening flight that took four and a half hours before I landed at Paphos Airport arriving at 1130pm. We stayed at a nice 4-star hotel called Paphos Garden Holiday Resort, pictured below:



We had three square meals a day and free drinks. Entertainment was laid on including Bingo and I won three nights on the trot amassing a total of £180! I went on four trips, one of which included Mount Troodos. It was snowing but cleared quickly after it had fallen, but the grounds were clear at Limassol and the other local tourist spots. The weather was like it was back here, wet, windy and we even had a thunderstorm!

On my return to Manchester Airport, I had to do an overnight stay in a bed and breakfast as there was no suitable train to get me to Northampton until 5.30am the following morning.

I joined the Royal Air Force and was trained at RAF Catterick as a Firefighter. I was stationed at RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus 50+ years ago in the rank of Senior Aircraftsman or SAC and felt the urge to return after all that time. My posting was cut short by 18 months due to the Turkish invasion of Northern Cyprus. My final posting was at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire and I left the RAF after four and a half years' service.

RBL MEMBERSHIP FEES 2025/26

Please note that, in line with the Motion passed at Annual Conference 2024, the annual membership fee for 2025/26 will rise to £22 from 4 September 2025.

WHAT'S ON DURING MAY & JUNE 2025?

3rd – 5th May - East Midlands Steam & Country Show at Lancaster Farm, Chelveston

– **Extra volunteers to help**

8th May – VE Day 80 Celebrations & Commemorations at Rushden War Memorial and Rushden Hall Park

16th – 18th May – RBL Annual Conference 2025

First Thursday of every month – 1st May & 5th June. 10am to 12.30pm – **Friends of the Legion** meet at The Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden. Pop along for a cuppa and a chat any time between 10am and 12.30pm.

Second Monday of every month – 12th May & 9th June*. 7.30pm start. **Branch Monthly Meeting** – followed by “*Alice Hawkins – Suffragette*” by Peter Hawkins JP, who is the Great Grandson of Alice Hawkins. ***Bonus Social Gathering on 9th June and Barbeque on 10th June – see next page 3 above for more details.**

Second Thursday of every month - 8th May & 12th June - 9am start - **NGH Breakfast Club** is organised by the Defence Medical Welfare Service at Northampton General Hospital, Cliftonville, Northampton, NN1 5BD. **Eat Street** is the hospital restaurant on the main corridor through the hospital opposite the Chapel. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks.

Last Friday of every month – 30th May & 27th June – 9am start – **KGH Breakfast Club** organised by the Defence Medical Welfare Service at Kettering General Hospital, Rothwell Road, Kettering, NN16 8UZ. The Basement Brassiere is located on the lower ground floor of the main hospital building. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks.

Every Wednesday & Saturday Morning – 9am start: Northants Breakfast Club (**NBC**) dine at The Needle and Awl. All Veterans are welcome – Veterans’ Families are invited to join on the last Saturday of each month; these are on **31st May & 28th June.**

Fourth Tuesday of every month - 27th May & 24th June. The Community Social & Craft Group meets at the Rushden Athletic Club on Newton Road, between 1pm and 3pm. RAFA Members Free. Guests £3/entry or £20 per year. This is open to any RBL Rushden Branch Members. For more information contact Carol on **07922 141589** or treasurer@rafarushden.org.uk

RBL WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, OR DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN OR RBL MEMBER WHO NEEDS HELP? IF SO, PLEASE CALL OUR BRANCH COMMUNITY COORDINATOR, PETER ARMSTRONG ON 07498 243683. REMEMBER, THE RBL IS HERE FOR YOU. IF HE CAN'T HELP, HE'LL GET YOU HELP, PART OF WHICH MAY BE RUN ALONG THE LINES OF THE DIAGRAM BELOW. PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT EVERY SITUATION IS DIFFERENT.

FREE E-LEARNING IN THE RBL – Branch Vice Chairman Paul McKay

Quote: 'If you think you are too small to have an impact in our branch community try going to bed with a mosquito in the room'.

I recently had a motivational spur to register for free RBL training courses under the general category of **Branch Community Coordinator (BCC)** and **Branch Community Support (BCS)**.

My reason in attending these courses; all delivered on-line, and taking a few hours of my time, was to keep in touch with new RBL member support and engagement developments. So, when RBL training opportunities come along, I like to think, just like you, that as members we can add value by completing these courses and helping to promote a stronger sense of community in our branch, and with added benefit of learning something new.

In its simplest form, the (Coordinator) BCC role is designed to support and document branch activities, including community engagement, Standard Bearing, events and the promotion of the (Support) BCS role, the compassionate volunteers who are focused on reducing loneliness within our community.

It can be confusing that both roles have Branch Community in its title but think of it this way. In its simplest form, one takes an active part in branch activities and fundraising events, attendance when requested at funerals, helps assist identifying those in need of support and the other in having a cuppa and a chat with lonely people, carrying out home and hospital visits and being a telephone buddy. You can hold both roles at the same time, and you do not need to be a committee member if you choose. Rushden Branch is fortunate to have two members in this role, myself and Peter Armstrong. Any member with a desire to support the branch and help others can apply.

Training is easy and informative. I learnt about social isolation, lone working, safeguarding adults, conflict of interest, personal data protection, the RBL contact centre and its sources of support.

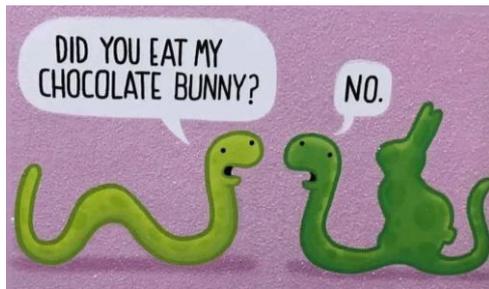
On completion you will receive an individual RBL email account to access the Membership Administration Portal (MAP) where there is a wealth of member information including access to documents, news, useful links, training and FAQs. As a registered BCS, you will need to be DBS checked. You will then receive an RBL identification card with a unique identification number. Travel expenses is also a feature of this role.

In practical terms, Community Support is to provide support to combat loneliness, develop companionship, identify needs, improve mental health and create a routine in life that a member may be missing. The training ensures this is done in a professional manner, protects RBL reputation and is of a uniform approach. For example, internal support can be to members having day to day difficulties, support with independent living, loved ones who have dementia, people with complex needs, such as drugs or alcohol dependency, homelessness, and information on physical rehab and care homes.

All beneficiaries identified in the first instance will be referred through the RBL Contact Centre, where needs will be matched with BCS Supporters based on location and shared interests, or if you prefer, you can contact the RBL Call **0808 802 8080** (free) from 8am to 8pm 7 days a week, who can allocate a care worker for general matters or a specialist.

Bottom line both BCC and BCS are roles in our Branch to engage, contribute, support, give information and provide signposting, in addition to that friendly cuppa and chat.

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOUR



I was visiting my DAUGHTER last night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper.
"This is the 21st century" she said.
"We don't waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad."
I can tell you this... that fly never knew what hit him...



YOUTH AFFILIATION SCHEME

The Youth Affiliation Scheme is being revamped, with a new leaflet and Youth Policy coming out very shortly. The scheme will be open to all uniformed and non-uniformed clubs and organisations and is a good way of raising awareness about the Royal British Legion to encourage the young people to take part in Branch activities, and to promote, support and encourage each other in their local community.

The scheme will also incorporate elements of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, along with training for a Youth Standard Bearer.

There will also be free educational resources available to assist with presentations within organisations.

This does mean that when all is finalised, a request will be made to all Branches to appoint a Branch Youth Officer, reporting to the County Youth Officer. This is an ideal opportunity for a Branch Member to volunteer for the role; if anyone is interested or wants to know more information, then please contact Peter Armstrong on **07498 243683** or via email him at Northamptonshire.CYO@rbl.community

Each organisation will be presented with a Certificate and published in the local paper. Further details will be forthcoming, so watch this space.

EVENTS PLANNED LATER IN THE YEAR – WE NEED YOUR HELP

28th June - Rushden Armed Forces Day. We will be having a Stall, probably a Tombola Stall run by Alan & Barbara Clark, Gazebos and the RBL Trailer at the Goods Shed Yard. Branch President David Hawker will be sketching portraits. We need volunteer **marshals** near the saluting dais on the High Street (outside the Independent Wesleyan Church) and to marshal those attending the Drumhead Service. We will also want **volunteers to help run the stalls** and the RBL Trailer. For more information, please contact a **Committee Member** or **Jake Baker** on **07525 441267**. They can offer transport assistance if needed to and from home.

12th July - Party in the Park at Rushden Hall Park. We will be having a Stall, a Tombola Stall probably run by Alan & Barbara Clark, Gazebos and the RBL Trailer. Branch President David Hawker will be sketching portraits. We need **volunteers** to help run the stalls and RBL Trailer.

3rd August - Classic Car Show at Rushden Hall Park. It is likely the RBL Trailer will be there, and this is ideally a recruiting opportunity. BCC Peter Armstrong, Poppy Appeal Organisers Ruth & Steve Miller and Jake & Lynne Baker have offered to support in recruiting new members, but more **engagers and volunteers to run the stalls** are required, so everybody can take a good break, and enjoy looking at the vintage vehicles.

6th September – Proms in the Park – Rushden Hall Park Walled Garden. We may be asked to support by providing **marshals**. Further information will follow when known.

7th September - Bark in the Park at Rushden Hall Park. It is likely the RBL Trailer will be there, and this is ideally a recruiting opportunity. BCC Peter Armstrong, Poppy Appeal Organisers Ruth & Steve Miller and Jake & Lynne Baker have offered to support in recruiting new members, but more **engagers and volunteers to run the stalls** are required, so everybody can take a good break and enjoy seeing the dogs. Barbara and Alan may be running a Tombola Stall too - tbc.

18th October – The Veteran’s Big Band commencing 3pm at Park Road Baptist Church - Whilst this will be a dedicated fundraising event for the RAF’s Wings Appeal, our local RAF Association have decided to split profits three ways evenly to the RBL, RNA and RAFA. We need Ushers, Refreshments Assistants and Bucket Holders for donations.

9th November - Remembrance Sunday at Rushden War Memorial. PAOs Ruth & Steve Miller will be seeking donation **bucket collectors** on the day from around 10.20am to 10.45am and 11.20am to 11.40am. More details to follow nearer the time.
IF YOU CAN HELP IN ANYWAY, PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER OR JAKE OR LYNNE ON 07525 441267 or rushden.secretary@rbl.community

WHO’S WHO AND HOW YOU CAN CONTACT THEM?

President - David Hawker: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Chairman/Media Rep: Jake Baker rushden.chairman@rbl.community **07525 441267**

Vice Chairman – Paul McKay: rushden.vicechairman@rbl.community

Secretary – Lynne Baker: rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Treasurer – Janet Flowers: rushden.treasurer@rbl.community

Committee Member – Heather Phillip: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Sally Morton: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Steve Miller: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Graham Chambers: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

BCC & BCS Rep – Peter Armstrong: rushden.bcc1@rbl.community or **07498 243683**

BCC & BCS Rep – Paul McKay: rushden.bcc2@rbl.community

Poppy Appeal Organiser – Ruth Miller: poppyappealrushden@gmail.com

Branch Standard Bearer - Mark Taberner-Stokes: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community