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RUSHDEN

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

RUSHDEN BRANCH NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2025

POPPY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: 25TH OCTOBER TO 8TH NOVEMBER 2025

It is not too early asking for Poppy Volunteers, so now really is the time to get in touch with Rushden's Poppy Appeal organising team, through Poppy Appeal Organiser Ruth Miller at either poppyappealrushden@gmail.com or via text ONLY on **07962 040685**. Please do pass Ruth's details to any family, friends or neighbours who wish to help.

BOGUS EMERGENCY ALERT TEST EMAILS

Off the back of the recent Emergency Alerts test, scammers are posing as the government asking for feedback with dodgy links to a survey. Even if it has the hallmarks of a trustworthy email, upon closer inspection, you'll find the message is from a spoofed address.

Which? Magazine describes what these messages look like, so click on this link and [what to do if you click on a malicious link](#)

RBL STRATEGY VIRTUAL ROADSHOWS

To enable all RBL members throughout the country and indeed, all over the world, to find out more about the RBL 10 Year Strategy, there will be three virtual Strategy Roadshows held in October as follows:

8 October 1pm – 2.30pm

9 October 9.30am – 11am

13 October 5.30pm – 7pm

For joining links, please refer to the August eNewsletter, September Central News or visit rbl.org.uk/strategyroadshows

WHAT'S ON IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS?

2nd October – 1000 hours to midday – Friends of the RBL Coffee Morning at the Athletic Club

3rd October – 1045 hours. 85th Anniversary of School Bombing. Alfred Lord Tennyson School

5th October – 1030 hours. Mayor's Civic Service, St Mary's Church, Rushden

13th October – 1930 hours. Branch Monthly Meeting. Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden

25th October – Poppy Appeal Fortnight until 8th November 2025

26th October – 11th Anniversary in ending of Op HERRICK in Helmand Province, Afghanistan

27th October – Calling Notice sent out to Members for Branch AGM on 17th November 2025

ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 17TH NOVEMBER 2025

The AGM this year is being held on 17th November 2025, **the third Monday of November 2025**.

Members are asked to note this date in their diary. It is hoped that as many members as possible can attend; this is also a great opportunity to be updated and to learn what we will be doing in 2026.

Second Monday of every month except March, June, September and December – Branch Monthly Meeting at the Athletic Club commencing 7.30pm. 8th December is a Branch Social. Christmas themed – more information to follow nearer the date.

This month's Branch Monthly Meeting is on 13th October 2025, chaired by Branch Vice Chair Paul McKay, after which he will talk about and chair an open discussion on "*Our Strategy 20252035*". This much talked about 10 Year RBL Strategy is of importance to us all. Laminated copies of the 10 Year Plan will be placed on tables and if you wish to look at this double-sided document, visit our branch website under Newsletters.

Fourth Tuesday of every month – 28th October 2025. The Community Social & Craft Group meet 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 Member. For more information contact Carol on **07922 141589** or treasurer@rafarushden.org.uk Next meet after this month's is on 25th November 2025.

Every Wednesday & Saturday Morning – 9am start. Northants Breakfast Club (**NBC**) dine at The Needle and Awl. All Veterans are welcome. Families are invited to join on the last Saturday of each month, namely 25th October and 29th November 2025.

First Thursday of every month – 2nd October: 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. The next after this month's meet is on 6th November.

Second Thursday of every month – 9th October 2025 - 9am start - NGH Breakfast Club 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. The next **NGH Breakfast Club** meet after this month's is on 13th November 2025.

Last Friday of every month – 31st October 2025 – 9am start – KGH Breakfast Club 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. The next **KGH Breakfast Club** meet after this month's is on 28th November.

WANTED FOR BRANCH FUNDRAISING

Gifts for children and adults for Tombola prizes for the Rushden Christmas Lights Switch-On (29th November 2025) are required to be donated. Suggestions are good quality soft toys, games and stationery items; and for adults, bottle tombola – any bottles eg perfumes/toiletries, drinks, jar or bottle goods. All donations can be received at our Branch Monthly Meeting in October and AGM in November; if unable to do so, please contact Jake Baker on **0725 441267** to plan for collection.

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

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. PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT EVERY SITUATION IS DIFFERENT.

MERCHANT NAVY DAY – WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2025

A brief ceremony to commemorate Merchant Navy Day took place at the Rushden War Memorial on 3rd September 2025. The Mayor of Rushden and Standards were present, after which light refreshments were enjoyed, with a good natter at St Mary's Church Hall.

131ST DEAN & SHELTON COUNTRY SHOW – SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2025

We all agreed this was as close a real country show as you can get, with activities and fun for everybody, including the Punch & Judy Show, professionally given by Peter Barratt JP; Peter recently gave us a fascinating talk about his Great Grandmother Alice Hawkins, a well-known suffragette in her time. The Viking Enactments went down with a treat, and we had a premium viewing spot of the arena. Thanks to the generosity of many members and friends of the branch, we raised a lot of money in the bottle tombola and nigh on everybody had a go at the buzz wire game. Branch President David Hawker's portrait drawings drew a lot of attention, boosting branch funds raised for the day to a total of £221.



All set up raring to go!



Even the Viking Enactors had a go!



Before being punched!

BARK IN THE PARK – SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2025

This popular annual fun dog show organised by Rushden Town Council returned to the Walled Garden of Rushden Hall Park on Sunday 7th September 2025. Unfortunately, the charity Veterans With Dogs was unable to attend, and it is hoped this small charity will continue to grow and they will come next year; it continues to do fantastic work for our veterans. The name of the dog mentioned in the last two newsletters was “Poppy”. Sorry for the suspense; she was otherwise engaged. A total of £262.30 was raised for branch funds.



Sally and Janet's shift running the stall



Mark & Alison Taberner-Stokes with Yuki



It's fair to say Yuki had a pretty good day that day – Congratulations all round

Editor's Note: With Contactless Machine receipts and cash for the Poppy Appeal totalling £43.10p combined with what was raised this weekend resulted in over £500 raised for Branch Funds. Well done everybody involved.

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BATTLE OF BRITAIN CHURCH SERVICE – SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2025

The Battle of Britain church service was held at St Mary's Church in Higham Ferrers led by the RAF Association Padre, Rev Louise Bishop. The church was packed. Afterwards there was an unveiling of a Blue Plaque on the wall of Wilson-Browne Solicitors in Higham Ferrers Market Square, in honour of WW2 RAF Fighter Ace Pilot Air Vice Marshall Edward Dixon Crew CB DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar and where he was born. AVM Crew's son Nigel unveiled the plaque in the presence of the Mayor of Higham Ferrers, Councillor Gary Salmon. We were blessed with a flyover of a WW2 Spitfire going over our heads three times and much to the delight of the crowds below. Read more about AVM Crew on page 4 of September 2025 Newsletter.



RAF Air Cadets Corps of Drums looking as immaculate as ever along with Standard Bearers



The formalities with all the Standard Bearers present prior to the blue plaque unveiling

INVICTUS 2027

The RBL will be taking Team UK – 60 competitors – to compete at the Invictus Games 2027 in Birmingham at a cost of £26,500 per competitor. We have received notice that if branches would like to support a beneficiary to take part in the Invictus Games, Birmingham, a briefing pack will be sent out in the coming weeks providing details on how branches and counties can get involved, what the request for support will be and the financial processes involved. If any member is interested in pursuing this matter further, please get in touch with Jake Baker on **07525 441267** or email him at the following:

rushden.chairman@rbl.community

RUSHDEN TOWN CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON – SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

Volunteers are sought to help run the RBL Stall for the town's Christmas Lights Switch On. The event runs from midday to 1630 hours when the lights are switched on. We will need to set up from 1000 hours. If any member can give a hand to help set up or run the stall for an hour or so, please contact a member of the Committee. Transport from and back to your home can be arranged if required.

BRANCH CHRISTMAS SOCIAL – 8TH DECEMBER 2025

This Christmas event is really not too far away and the Committee wishes to make the catering side of the event a greater success than it has been before. To do that, they will need to know who is coming and whether there are any special dietary requirements, such as gluten free, vegan, nut allergies, etc. There will be a list made available for members to put their names down to attend and state whether there are any dietary requirement. It will be available at both the Branch Monthly Meeting on 13th October and the AGM on 17th November. Please be sure to put your name down if you wish to attend, making note of your dietary needs.

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WHO'S WHO IN OUR BRANCH?

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

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

Vice Chair – 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

Branch Padre – Pauline Cook: richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk **07871 923337**

Asst Branch Padre – Richard Cook: richardpaulinec@yahoo.co.uk **07871 923337**

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

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

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

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

OK, TIME FOR A LARF FOLKSHUMOUR!! 🤡

A funny and true story about the Queen Elizabeth II:

Around 2005, the Queen and her Personal Protection Officer, Dick Griffin, were walking alone one afternoon in the hills near the Scottish royal castle, Balmoral. Two tourists approached them and engaged in conversation. Griffin recalls:

"There were two hikers coming towards us, and the Queen would always stop and say hello. They were two Americans on a walking holiday. It was clear from the moment we stopped that they hadn't recognised the Queen, which was fine. The American gentleman was telling the Queen where they came from, where they were going next, and where they'd been in Britain. I could see it coming, and sure enough, he said to Her Majesty: *'And where do you live?'* She replied: *'Well I live in London, but I've got a holiday home just the other side of the hills.'* "He said: *'How long have you*

been coming up here?' She replied: 'I've been coming up here ever since I was a little girl, so over 80 years.' You could see the cogs whirring, so he said: 'Well, if you've been coming up here for over 80 years, you must have met the Queen.' Quick as a flash, she said: 'I haven't, but Dick here meets her regularly.' The hiker then asked Griffin what the monarch was like in person. Because I was with her a long time, and I knew I could pull her leg, I said: 'Oh, she can be very cantankerous at times, but she's got a lovely sense of humour.' The next thing I knew, this guy comes round, puts his arm around my shoulder, and before I could see what was happening, he gets his camera, GIVES IT TO THE QUEEN, and says: 'Can you take a picture of the two of us?' Then we swapped places, and I TOOK A PICTURE OF THEM WITH THE QUEEN. And we never let on, and we waved goodbye. Afterwards, Her Majesty said to me: 'I'd love to be a fly on the wall when he shows those photographs to his friends in America, and hopefully someone tells him who I am!.'

RIP, Your Majesty ❤️

Sad news from the Nestle factory today. A night shift worker was crushed beneath a case of chocolate that fell 20 feet off the storage racking. He called for help repeatedly but every time he shouted 'The Milky Bars are on me' his colleagues just cheered.

I ordered new coats for my kids and for convenience I had them shipped directly to their school's Lost and Found section.

After an accident I came round to find a paramedic cutting all my clothes off. I quickly explained that I was late for work that morning and I couldn't find any clean boxers so I slipped on a pair of my wife's knickers. "I fully understand sir" he said as he cut through my bra straps.

I was arguing with a guy at a bar. He said he was a big pop star in the 80s. I didn't believe him, but he was adamant...



**ON A MORE SOMBRE NOTE,
LOOK AT THIS POSTER**



A poster for the 'Festival of Remembrance 2025' at De Montfort Hall Leicester. The poster features the Royal British Legion logo, the date 'Saturday 18th October - 7pm', and ticket information 'Tickets only £11 - On sale now demonthall.co.uk - 0116 233 3111'. It also lists performers: Enderby Band, BollyARKK Dance, Leicestershire Sing! Junior Choir, Anne Marie Marlow, and Thurmaston Marching Brass. A large red 'V' with '80' inside and 'VE | VJ DAY' at the bottom is prominent. At the bottom of the poster is a row of red poppies on green grass. The bottom left has a small 'FR' logo and 'REGULATOR' text, and the bottom right has 'Registered charity number: 219279'.

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

RBL 10 YEAR STRATEGY – 2025 TO 2035

The acronym MATCH which Vice Chair Paul McKay mentioned at the August Branch Monthly Meeting, is an adopted strap line for all RBL membership communication and engagement and something we as members, whether officials or not should adopt in all member-to-member communications, to ensure RBL integrity.

Key Principles ‘MATCH’

Right M essage	Tailored, relevant, accurate content
Right A udience	Understanding needs, behaviours, attitudes
Right T one	Kind, warm, friendly, welcoming, grateful
Right C hannel	Integrated campaigns, preferences
Right H our	Scheduling for greatest impact

Membership Communication and Engagement strategy

We should adopt these key principles for our communications and engagement; and so, to make it easier, try to remember to use this acronym MATCH.

JUST RELEASED FROM FORCES NEWS: SCOTTISH SOLDIERS FROM WORLD WAR ONE LAID TO REST, 110 YEARS AFTER THEIR SACRIFICE



Soldiers of the 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland alongside the coffins of Lt James Allan and LCpl Gordon McPherson (Picture: Crown Copyright)

The families of two Scottish soldiers, who were killed in action 110 years ago, gathered in France for a special ceremony, where the men were laid to rest alongside their comrades. The two men, Lieutenant James Grant Allan, 9th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders and Lance Corporal Gordon McPherson, 7th Battalion, Cameron Highlanders, were killed on 25 September 1915, the first day of the Battle of Loos. Eight men in total were laid to rest at the Loos British Cemetery Extension, but the identities of the six others remain unknown.

A natural leader - Lt Allan left Edinburgh University to join the Gordon Highlanders in 1914, when the war was declared. Known as "Jim" to his family, he was an enthusiastic games player and a natural leader among his cousins.



James Grant Allan was born in Melrose, Scotland in 1894 to William John Allan and Isabella Catherine Brown and was the second of four children (Picture: Crown Copyright)

Studying the humanities, he kept a "commonplace book" in which he entered poems, which his sister Margaret continued after his death. He was very close to his sisters and wrote regularly to them, as well as to his parents, while he was away. A friend and fellow officer wrote: "Jim's men thought the world of him. I have gained from his friendship. He may have left this world but only to go to a freer one... I have been strengthened by the thought of him, or his presence."

He was identified after artefacts found with the casualties suggested one was an officer, which narrowed the search. The families of the battalion's 14 missing officers were traced and tested, with Lt Allan's family proving a positive match.



Gordon McPherson was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, in 1892 to James McPherson and Mary Ann Rowe and was one of nine siblings (Picture: Crown Copyright)

Life and soul of the section - LCpl McPherson was working as a tobacconist when he joined the Cameron Highlanders in November 1914 alongside his two brothers and their father. He wrote regularly to his mother during the war and, in one of the last letters he sent her, he wrote: "So cheer up, Mother dear, and when this is over, look what a happy time we will have when your four soldiers come home."

A fellow soldier in his section described him as "the life and soul of the section", and his imitations of Charles Chaplin were "enjoyed very much" by his comrades. "His favourite song, 'Trumpeter, what are you sounding now!', grew to be the most popular song in the section. It was Gordon's song. We can't sing it now," he said.

LCpl McPherson was identified by a small set of buttons from the Newcastle Corporation Tramway that he had in his pocket at the time of his death. After reviewing the 1911 census, MOD war detectives, from the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre Commemorations team, found that LCpl McPherson's father worked for the Tramway, and a DNA test confirmed a match with his next of kin.



A piper plays as the remains of Lt James Allan are carried to his final resting place by soldiers of the 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (Picture: Crown Copyright)

Nicholas Allan, a great-nephew of Lt Allan, said: "I feel very moved and honoured by the work of the MOD that it is honouring this great-uncle of mine who I barely knew existed. "I feel a profound sense that something has been completed. It speaks to me of all those whose bodies were never found. I feel we're completing something for them too." "It's been emotional in a good way," said Alistair McPherson, a great-nephew of LCpl McPherson. "We have known Gordon all our lives because of the letters we have got, and it's just wonderful to have found him. He's no longer lost." Nicola Nash, MOD War Detective, said: "Lt Allan and LCpl McPherson have both been buried today, 110 years after they were killed. "With half a million British servicemen still missing from the First World War, every identity we make is a huge achievement. It has been a real privilege to give closure to their families and lay these heroes to rest with honour."



Lieutenant Laura Donovan presents the Union Jack to Alistair McPherson, great-nephew of LCpl Gordon McPherson (Picture: Crown Copyright)

Jeremy Prince, director of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission France Area, added: "This cemetery, inaugurated just one year ago by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, was established to receive the remains of soldiers recently discovered [and those who may be found in the future] during ongoing work and research in the region. "The ceremony also coincides with the 110th anniversary of the Battle of Loos – a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made during the First World War. "We are proud to offer these soldiers a final resting place worthy of their courage and service. We will remember them."