



Central News – November 2025

Membership information, updates and engagement

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Key dates

10 November 2025	Deadline to register for Bosnia Remembrance Service
17 November 2025	Membership Strategy Roadshow [click to join]
8 December 2025	National elections Q&A session (virtual)

Membership Strategy Roadshows

Thank you to everyone who attended our Roadshows last month. It was great to see so many members keen to engage with our ten-year Strategy and share their thoughts on what we can do to achieve our objectives.

For those previously unable to attend, **we're pleased to announce an additional Roadshow will be held 6.30pm – 8pm Monday 17 November**. Please [use this link to join the session on the day](#).

To view the recordings and slides from the first three Roadshows, [please click here](#). FAQs from all four Roadshows will be shared in December's Central News.

Annual Conference 2026

Save the date! Annual Conference 2026 takes place 8-10 May 2026 at the Brighton Centre in Brighton, East Sussex. [Find all the key information on our website](#).

The provisional agenda will be shared in March 2026; however, we can confirm that familiar cornerstones will be returning, including keynote speaker addresses, National Membership Awards, Standard Bearer Competitions and an Act of Remembrance. Registration will open 15 January 2026 via a link [on our website](#). You can book your accommodation through a [handy dedicated portal](#) set up by the venue.

National Elections 2025/26

Are you keen to play a role in RBL's national leadership? Nominations are open for four Trustee roles and seven Membership Council Representatives for the following areas:

- Cheshire and Merseyside
- Greater Manchester and Lancashire
- Northern Ireland
- South East Midlands
- South West Midlands
- West Midlands
- The Women's Section

If you're interested, you'll need to be nominated for a role by your branch and attend an assessment panel before being progressed to the voting stage. Successful candidates will take up their positions in May 2026.

An online Q&A session for prospective applicants will be held Monday 8 December. [Register your place here](#) – you don't need to have been nominated to attend. Alternatively, a recorded online briefing is [available to watch here](#). Full details of the roles and elections process have been shared with all branches and are [available on our website](#).

Railway Remembrance in South and West Yorkshire

A historic locomotive nameplate bearing the title *British Legion* was recently unveiled at the Roger Bell Collection in Ingrow, West Yorkshire, following its donation from the late Mr Roger Bell's estate. As



RBL was unable to appropriately store or display the item, it was transferred to [The Bahamas Locomotive Society](#) alongside his other memorabilia, with a £3,000 legacy gifted in lieu.

Jeff Gantschuk, County Vice Chair for South and West Yorkshire (pictured left), attended the unveiling and dedicated the nameplate as a continuing memorial to the RBL and its values. The event marked 90 years since the name *British Legion* was unveiled on locomotive No.6170 in front of 250 veterans.

The museum's exhibition now includes nameplates honouring *British Legion*, *Patriot*, and *Private E Sykes VC*, ensuring their stories and Mr Bell's legacy are preserved. The November edition of *Steam Railway* magazine will also carry an illustrated article on locomotive 6170 *British Legion*.

Back from the brink – the revival of Old Catton Branch

In 2017, Old Catton Branch, Norfolk, was struggling to maintain its identity. Its operations had been absorbed by another branch, and it was under county support. In the same year, Lyndsay Curruthers got in touch. After experiencing the Festival of Remembrance along with her son, Sam, and her mother – a longstanding member – she wanted to help.

While Sam trained as a standard bearer and even went on to speak at Annual Conference 2019, Lindsay, now the branch's Point of Contact, supported the Poppy Appeal and gave talks to schools and community groups. But "the real breakthrough", she says, came during the first lockdown of 2020.

With time on her hands, Lindsay used genealogical tools and military history forums to research the names on the local WWII memorial. The result was enough material for a book which, with support from local sponsors, was produced and 3,500 copies distributed free throughout the parish and neighbouring villages.

It also led to an inspired community activity. With boards placed in front gardens and windows, often where the servicemen and women had lived, a Remembrance Trail was created. “This Covid-safe tribute allowed the community to engage in Remembrance during lockdown and received widespread media coverage,” she says.



By engaging the local community, the trail generated renewed interest in the branch. A committee was formed and in February 2021, Old Catton came out of county-supported status.

Today, the branch has a committee of eight, 60 members including a BCS representative and events organiser, four standard bearers including a youth bearer, and regularly draws 15–20 attendees to meetings.



A bi-monthly newsletter, village magazine updates and local events such as family fun days and Remembrance commemorations help to keep members and the community engaged. “From near closure to becoming a vibrant community anchor, Old Catton Branch has demonstrated the power of

Remembrance, storytelling, and service,” says Lindsay. “Its revival is a testament to what can be achieved when people come together with purpose and passion.”

Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 2 December.