



# The Royal British Legion

## Banwell Branch

### Newsletter – February 2024

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**Chair's Foreword** - And whoosh – all of a sudden Christmas and New Year are behind us and we are emerging from the grip of winter and looking forward to Spring and colour once again gracing our land as spring flowers begin to emerge.

Last month the Branch took part in the Christmas Tree display in the church – many of the decorations were made by the WI for which my hearty thanks go to them. I do hope you were able to visit the church and see all the entries.

2024 sees the 80th anniversary of momentous turning points of WWII. The D-Day landings marked the beginning of the liberation of western Europe. Elsewhere, from Italy to Kohima and Imphal in India, hard-fought battles were turning the tide of the war. We are looking to commemorate this occasion with an afternoon tea in Banwell Castle – I hope that you will be able to join the event. More will follow in due course.



Rather disappointingly our first Branch meeting of the year saw only 6 people attend – 3 of whom were your Committee and am hoping that it was because it was a really cold, dark and frosty night. I look forward to seeing you at the February meeting, which is our opportunity, as a Branch, to thank the Poppy Sellers and remember our meetings now start at **7.00pm**. (not 7.30pm as stated in the Banwell Parish Magazine)

**Penny Mottram**

**Chair**

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**From the Secretary** - The dinner on the 28th of January went very well at our new venue - The Full Quart at Hewish. 22 of us were there and were looked after very well by the staff.



The next date – the lunch – has been confirmed with The Full Quart as Saturday 27 April 1230 for 1300 start. This time we are trying a Saturday and hope that more people feel they would like to come. I shall let you have details before Easter having discussed the menu around mid-March. If anyone has suggestions re menu then please be in touch. I cannot guarantee every suggestion can be met but we do have an input to the menu this year.

Talking of dates, the new programme can be found at the end of this newsletter. We are planning a number of speakers and have already confirmed the speaker from the RNLI in May in their 200th year. Echoing Penny, please note that all meetings start at **7pm** in future. This was at the suggestion of members at the November Branch meeting. The Committee are also looking at ways to promote the RBL and open meetings to the village especially when there are speakers.

Don't forget our Facebook Page and Website those of you with internet access. Lizzie works hard to keep things up to date and the numbers joining Facebook are slowly increasing. If anyone who reads this newsletter and currently receives it 'hand delivered/by post' but would like to receive it electronically then please let me know. It would save us postage and 'shoe' leather! I know not everyone has email so there is no problem for it to continue being hand delivered if you prefer.

I end with a little 'ditty' that my Mother used to frequently quote even if it is slightly amended from the original.

**Laugh and the World Laughs with you,  
Weep and you weep alone,  
For this tired old earth has need of your Mirth,  
It has troubles enough of its own.**

I reflected on this at the dinner last night – everyone has a story to tell - and on seeing the headlines in the paper today I felt how appropriate the words are at this time. I just felt you might like to reflect on the 'ditty' and especially the last line.

**Gill Fawcitt**

**Secretary**

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## **From the Membership Secretary**

Since our last newsletter it is with sadness that we said goodbye to Jean Harris and Patricia Reynolds, who were members of the Branch for a number of years. On a lighter note, I would like to welcome Emma Allen who joined in October, Meg Slingo who has transferred her membership to our Branch and Sheila Nash. Our current membership now stands at 47.

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**Penny Mottram, Membership Secretary**

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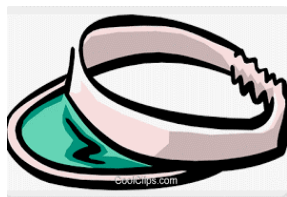
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### **Editor’s News**



New Year = New Look for our Newsletter, hopefully the simplified version will prove easier to read and manage. As always, your comments and articles for inclusion are most welcome, see “Contact Us” for details. Can I have any articles, for inclusion in the next newsletter, by 28 Apr 24. Please see the 2024 Branch Meetings and Events Diary noting that our **branch meetings will start at 7 pm/19.00**,

thank you.

**Tony Lyndon, Editor**

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## Remembrance Day 2023



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## RNLI Presentation – May 24 Meeting



This year the RNLI will be celebrating their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We look forward to welcoming Dr Glyn Hayes from Weston RNLI who will give a short presentation on the work of the Institution. It will be good to get an update on the involvement of the RNLI in re-establishing a boathouse and deep-water launch site on Birnbeck Island. This should have a marked effect on their response times towards “Saving Lives at Sea”.

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## Poppy Co-ordinator's Report



Morrisons donations Card Reader £2376 + Cash counted & banked £4849 Total £7225

Remembrance Day Service £187.45  
 Banwell News £237.80  
 Banwell Co-op £78.58  
 Banwell Primary £137.93  
 Bell Inn £21.00  
 Total £662.76

**Grand Total 2023 Poppy Appeal Donations £7887.76**

Best regards,

**Martin Hemmings, Poppy Co-ordinator**

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## Veteran's Identity Card

Thousands of Armed Forces veterans are now able to apply for an ID card, with a new option to apply online.



After five months of testing of the new digital service, veterans can apply now for their cards by visiting the GOV.UK website at [gov.uk/veteran-card](https://www.gov.uk/veteran-card)

The Ministry of Defence says it is delivering the service, together with the Office for Veterans' Affairs, as part of ongoing improvements to veteran support.

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## Tales from 955 Sqn



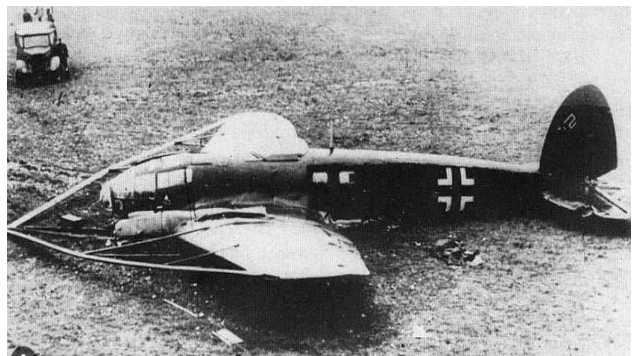
955 Squadron (Royal Auxiliary Air Force) were headquartered at Banwell Castle between 1941-44. They flew barrage balloons around the local area to protect the Bristol Aeroplane Company's "shadow" aircraft factories.

Life on the Balloon Squadron was mostly one of repetition in maintaining the deterrent, occasionally this was interspersed with moments of great danger as the barrage itself came under attack.

From the Operations Log:

*28 Jun 42 – 0117 (hrs) RUDLOE "SHINE". "Stand-by at 0113 H.O. Red 0112. 20/25 Hostile planes minelaying in BRISTOL CHANNEL and dropped a considerable number of H.E. and incendiaries in Weston-super-Mare and district. One hostile aircraft impacted cable of 55/1 but did not crash\*. Both F.H.Qs were damaged by blast. "A" Flight evacuated owing to a D/A bomb.*

*29 Jun 42 – 0114 (hrs) 0150 H.O. Red. Minor blitz on WESTON-SUPER-MARE by 25/30 aircraft; attacks made with machine guns, incendiaries and H.E. Balloons at sites 55/11 and 55/12 shot down, some further damage to "A" Flight H.Q. and minor damage to huts. Considerable damage and fires in the town. "DULL" from RUDLOE at 0310 hrs.*



Balloon-Speak Terminology Buster:

"SHINE" is the order to deploy the Barrage.  
 "H.O." Red means Hostile Only (Air Attack) Red.  
 "H.E." stands for High Explosive (Bombs).  
 "F.H.Q" stands for Force Headquarters.  
 "D/A" stands for Delayed Action.  
 "DULL" is the order to stand-down the Barrage.

Heinkel He111 fitted with a Balloon Cable Deflector\*

To be continued. © Crown Copyright

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## Contact Us



RBL Website:	<a href="#">The Royal British Legion</a>
RBL Banwell Branch	<a href="#">Website Link</a> <a href="#">Facebook</a>
Chair: Penny Mottram	<a href="mailto:penanbill@aol.com">penanbill@aol.com</a>
Secretary: Gill Fawcitt	<a href="mailto:gill_fawcitt04@yahoo.com">gill_fawcitt04@yahoo.com</a>
Editor: Tony Lyndon (07886 292035)	<a href="mailto:seriese8@sky.com">seriese8@sky.com</a>

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## 2024 Branch Meetings and Events Diary

Please note that guests are welcome at all meetings but if there is to be food the Secretary would appreciate advance notice so that she knows the numbers attending and can order sufficient food.

<p><b><u>Dates of Branch meetings for 2024</u></b></p> <p>(As of 1 Feb 24)</p>	<p><b><u>Branch Meeting</u> start time of <u>1900</u> unless notified otherwise.</b></p> <p><b>Please note the earlier time</b></p> <p><b>The Committee have speakers in mind for the respective branch meetings but have yet to confirm. They also plan to look at what speakers for 2025 at the May Committee meeting so that a comprehensive programme can be produced well in advance of 2025.</b></p>
<p><b>15 February</b></p>	<p>'Thank you to Poppy Sellers' Supper but also includes all RBL Members</p>
<p><b>21 March</b></p>	<p>Formal Branch Meeting with speaker from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission confirmed</p>
<p><b>Saturday 27 April</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch at The Full Quart, Hewish. 1230 for 1300</b></p>
<p><b>16 May</b></p>	<p>Branch Meeting Speaker from the RNLI confirmed</p>
<p><b>8 June</b></p>	<p><b>D-Day Commemorations at Banwell Castle in the afternoon – cream tea 3 – 6pm. Details still to be confirmed although bookings have been made at the Castle.</b></p>
<p><b>20 June</b></p>	<p>Formal Branch Meeting – Possible theme/speaker re the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Battles of Kohima and Imphal this year</p>
<p><b>19 September</b></p>	<p>Branch Meeting – Speaker still to be approached</p>
<p><b>17 October</b></p>	<p><b>AGM</b> with a speaker yet to be invited but Committee have someone in mind.</p>
<p><b>26 October</b></p>	<p><b>Dinner – awaiting confirmation of date from The Full Quart</b></p>
<p><b>10 November</b></p>	<p>Remembrance Sunday</p>
<p><b>11 November</b></p>	<p>Remembrance Day</p>
<p><b>21 November</b></p>	<p>Branch Meeting – Possible Musical Evening of fun</p>

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