



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION BANWELL

Patron: His Majesty The King

Newsletter – November 2024



Chair's Foreword

I start my introduction to the November newsletter by saying farewell to Cliff Hobbs who passed away peacefully on 6 Sep. He had been a member of this branch since it was re-formed in 2001. Our thoughts are with his widow Maureen.

Following the AGM, I am pleased to announce that all Officers have been re-elected for another year. This continuity will ensure a smooth transition and allow us to build upon our successes as we embark on another year of serving our community and honouring the sacrifices of our veterans.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new President, Tom Couch, who brings a wealth of experience and dedication to our Legion. I am confident that under his leadership, we will continue to strengthen our commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our outgoing President, Brian Godden, for his tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to our Legion. His leadership and guidance have been invaluable.

I would also like to welcome our new Minister – Rev Andrew Bell. If you have not already had a chance to meet him he will be assisting Matthew in our Remembrance Parade. Please take time to introduce yourself.

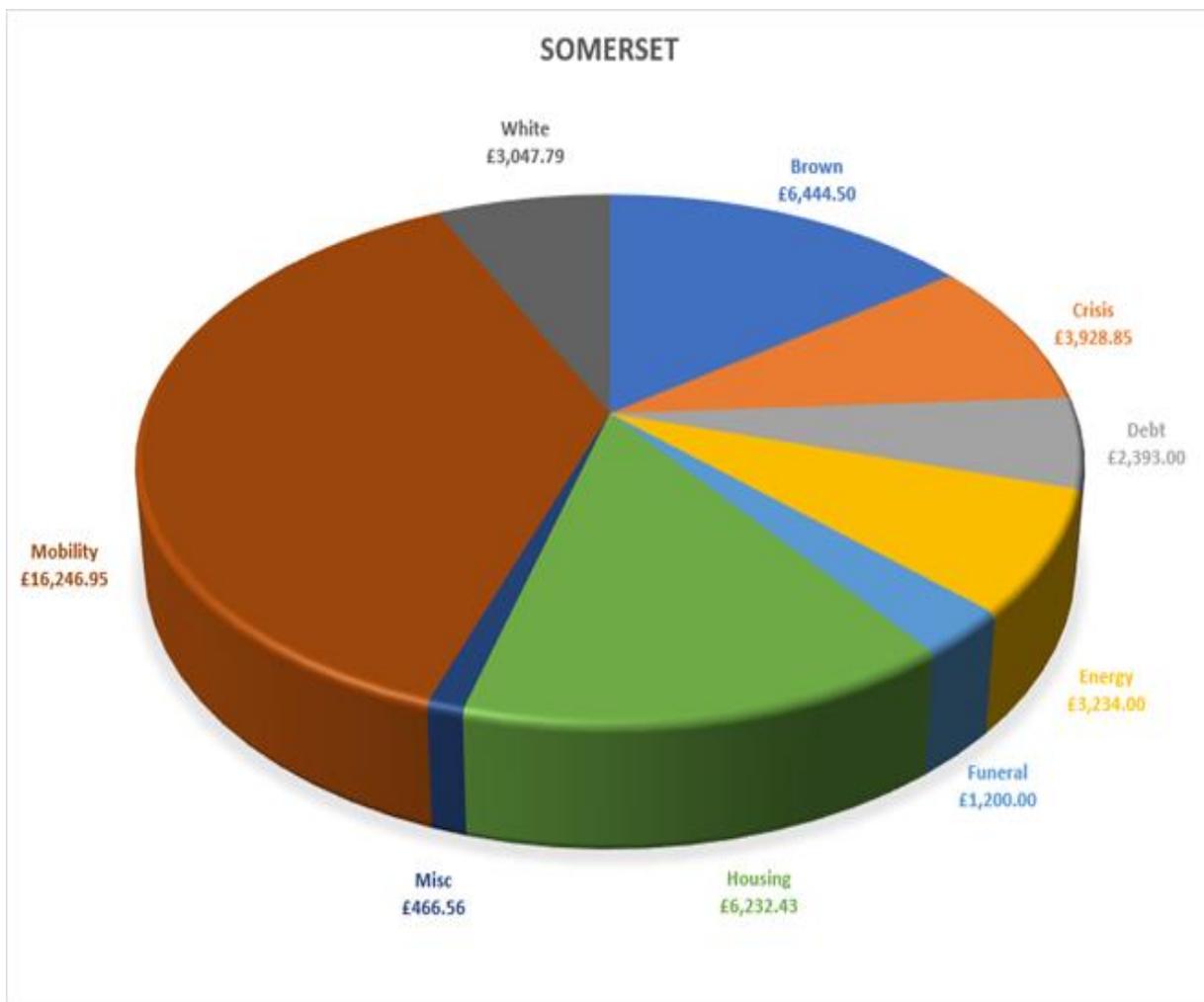
Gill will update you on our recent activities as well as information about upcoming events. Since our last Newsletter I attended the County Branch Chairs Seminar where we took part in a workshop looking at ways in which to encourage veterans and friends to join local Branches. We are not alone in this challenge and once again I appeal to you to help in looking at ways in which we can do so.

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In August I attended the Somerset County Committee Meeting and key things I took away were:

1. There are 58 full branches and 7 that are under County Support and membership stands at 6148. Unfortunately both Axbridge and Mark Branches have applied to become Community Supported Branches (CSB).
2. 72 grants were approved (applications for support from veterans) totalling £43,194 – see below for the split of this money:



I look forward to seeing many you at our Remembrance Parade and, as this will be our last Newsletter before Christmas – wish you and your families a peaceful and enjoyable festive period.

Penny Mottram
Chair

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From the Secretary

2024 has had more speakers at branch meetings and attendance has been slightly up on previous years presumably because of more interesting speakers. You will see from the 2025 dates at the end of this newsletter that we plan to have more speakers. The last one we had – on Medical Detection Dogs – was fascinating and well worth listening to. The committee thought we might invite them back sometime next year. If you have any ideas or contacts please let me know as meetings need to be as interesting as possible.

A presentation was made to Brian Godden our outgoing President. Penny has already paid tribute to Brian but I would like to do so too as he has contributed to the Banwell Branch for 20 years in some capacity or the other.



In recognition of Brian's service to the Banwell RBL he was presented with a certificate and pewter tankard by Penny Mottram, Chair of our branch.



Tom Couch takes over as President

Dinner You will no doubt notice that there has been no date set for our usual Autumn Dinner. Finding a venue that has a private area for functions with a decent menu at a reasonable cost is proving a challenge. At the time of writing this we are down to two possibles but we will have to postpone until the New Year. We would look to combine it with celebrating 25 years of the Branch's current incarnation as well as seeing in the New Year.

You will also notice that the lunch next year is in May which is due to Easter falling almost in the middle of the month, it was decided to move it to May to avoid clashing with holidays.

Gill Fawcitt
Secretary

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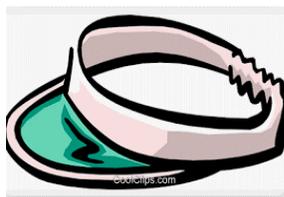
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From the Membership Secretary

Membership remains static at 47. All members are encouraged to get involved with Branch meetings and activities as together we can make a positive difference to the lives of veterans and their families.

**Penny Mottram,
Membership Secretary**

Editor's News



Your Editor is now the new Poppy Collection Coordinator, having taken over from Martin Hemmings - so anything related to this please come to me please. Our thanks go to Martin who has managed this role for the last 10 years. Working on average amounts collected during this time works out at £80,000 raised in donations to the RBL - a fantastic amount I think you'll agree. Martin and his partner Brenda will remain as collection volunteers. Anything for the Newsletter to me please, details on the contact page, thank you.

**Tony Lyndon
Editor**

Veterans ID accepted as Voter ID



The HM Armed Forces Veteran Card is to be put on the list of photographic identifications accepted in polling stations as voter ID, in addition to the already accepted MOD 90 ID card. Veterans Minister, Mr Carns said, "When you join the Service you get your MOD 90 ID card and then when you leave you hand your MOD 90 in, and you have nothing necessarily to show for your service. These changes are set to be made in time for the 2025 local elections in May, with Mr Carns confirming that "it will be broadened out in due course". When asked what else he and the Government were looking to allow veterans' cards to be used for, Mr Carns said, "Soon it should be accepted as any form of official ID, which is fantastic for veterans as they come out of service." To all the veterans who are yet to get a card, he added: "Sign up for it as fast as possible, and we'll do our best to get it to you as quickly as possible."

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BANWELL REMEMBRANCE PARADE & SERVICE 10th NOVEMBER 2024

PROGRAMME TIMINGS

The Parade

The Parade will be organised as follows:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 2:30pm | Marchers & Banners assemble in the Car Park |
| 2:45pm | Parade marches off direct to the church |
| 3:00pm | Remembrance Service begins |
| 3:45pm | Assemble outside the church and March to the War Memorial |
| 4:00pm | The Laying of Wreaths at the War Memorial |
| 4:30pm | Parade dismissed at the Car Park |

Note: East Street, West Street and Church Street will be closed to traffic during the actual parade and Wreath laying.

The Service

The service will begin at 3:00pm – Service Sheets will be provided

Laying of Wreaths at the War Memorial

Under the direction of the Parade Marshal

Last Post will sound – all standards are to be dipped during the Silence and remain dipped until the Reveille. If we are unable to get a bugler, then this will be carried out in the two minute silence.

The Wreath laying will be led by the Parish Council, followed by the Royal British Legion. When the wreath laying is complete and the final blessing has been received the parade will move off to the Car Park.

Wooden Crosses

An area in the churchyard will be available 10 days prior to the Remembrance Service in which wooden crosses may be inserted to remember those that have fallen (these crosses are available from the Poppy Sellers).

Rehearsal

A Rehearsal will be held in St Andrew's Church at **7:15pm on Thursday 7th November** for the RBL and all youth groups.

Remembrance Day Monday 11th November

At St Andrew's Church on Monday 11th November at 10:30 we will gather at the Field of Remembrance in the Churchyard for a short service and the two minutes silence at 11am. Please join us to remember with pride and gratitude, those who have fought and died for us.

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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. The first record below talks about a near miss for a Hurricane fighter, the second describes an inspection of the squadron at Banwell Castle by the Air Officer Commanding, Balloon Command.

From the Operations Log:

30 Nov 42

" Shine " at 12.52. Home Office " Red " at 12.57 hours. At 13.10 Duty Pilot requested a lane for a Fighter. At 13.12 the Balloon on Site 20 burst in the air at 3700 feet. At 13.40 hours the Hurricane Fighter returned and impacted the cable of Site 11. He landed safely, with very little damage to the machine. The Balloon was ripped and came down not far from the Site. The Home Office " White " was received at 13.15 hours and the " Dull " from Rudloe at 13.22 hours. Uncontrolled Balloons were again flown to 500 feet

30 Dec 42

AIR MARSHAL SIR LESLIE GOSAGE, K.C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O., M.C., AIR OFFICER COMMANDING BALLOON COMMAND, accompanied by AIR COMMODORE G.J.R. TURNER O.B.E., A.O.C. 32 Group and GROUP CAPTAIN F.V. DRAKE, M.C. commanding NO. 11. BALLOON CENTRE inspected the Squadron - a Guard of Honour was mounted at S. JARROLD HEADQUARTERS. The party lunched at BANWELL and afterwards inspected the new accommodation at S.H. ., "B" Flight H.Q. and 10 Balloon Sites finishing up with tea at "A" Flight H.Q.

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Contact Us



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2025 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 sufficient food can be ordered.

| Dates for 2025 | Meeting/Activity | Type |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 16 January | Ex Services AGM | Formal |
| 20 February | Poppy Supper | Thank you to Poppy Sellers |
| 20 March | Branch Meeting | Speaker tbc |
| 11 May | LUNCH | Venue tbc |
| 15 May | Branch Meeting | Speaker tbc |
| June | VE/VJ Commemoration | Date/Venue/Activity tbc |
| 19 June | Branch Meeting | Speaker tbc |
| 18 September | Branch Meeting | Speaker tbc |
| 16 October | AGM | Formal |
| 25 October | Dinner | Venue and date tbc |
| 9 November | Remembrance Sunday | Parade |
| 11 November | Remembrance Day | St Andrews Church |
| 20 November | Branch Meeting | Speaker tbc/Christmas theme? |

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