

HISTORY OF THE
YEOVIL
BRANCH, ROYAL
BRITISH LEGION

**From 2018
Onwards**

Compiled by Peter Forrester

PRE-2018 HISTORY

The Yeovil Branch of the British Legion was formed on Friday 17th June 1921.

On Tuesday, 12th July 1921, the first annual general meeting of the British Legion was held in Yeovil with the purpose of setting the subscriptions and the elections of the officials (The Western Chronicle dated Friday 15th July 1921, page 11, carried a report about the meeting).

The membership of the British Legion was set at 6 shillings per year, and membership of the Yeovil Branch and Club would be set at 9 shillings per year, a total of 15 shillings per year. This proposal was carried unanimously. The second Tuesday in each month was then fixed as the Legion's general meeting night. It was further resolved that members would address each other as "Comrade".

The following officials were elected:

President - Colonel G.C.W. Heneage, D.S.O., M.V.O.

Chairman – Mr. F. Denman.

Secretary – Mr R.W. Miller and Mr A. Lea.

Executive Committee – Messrs. A.R. Gould, G. Sibley, S. Martin.

During September 1921, Mr. A.H.J. Lea resigned as Joint Secretary due to him leaving the region. The Secretary was then confirmed as Mr. R.W. Miller.

The Western Chronicle dated Friday 14th October 1921, page 3, reported: "*BRITISH LEGION CLUB HOUSE. – The British Legion (Yeovil and District Branch) has just acquired the Mansion House, Princes-street, Yeovil, for use as a club-house for ex-Service men, and the committee will be most grateful for any contributions towards the furnishing of the premises. Contributions, however small, will be appreciated and can be sent to the resident secretary on the premises.*"

ITEM 001

April 2018

YEOVIL BRANCH, ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

In 2018 the branch was nearly lost through a lack of interest of anyone becoming a branch officer or member of the committee, sadly an all too familiar story. The branch was saved and began with a slow resurrection in April 2018. The elected branch officers and committee were:

Branch President - Lt. Col. (retired) Christopher Le Hardy.

Branch Chair – Simon Woodrow.

Branch Vice-Chair – Peter Forrester

Branch Treasurer – Andy Kendall

Branch Secretary – Dan Crook

Branch Standard Bearer – Dan Crooke

Committee – Bruce Trigger

Committee – Craig Price

Committee – Tricia Hymas

ITEM 002

YEOVIL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

24th April 2018

- 1) Act of Remembrance by Chairman
- 2) Chairman's opening remarks
- 3) Apologies for Absence
- 4) Minutes of Previous Meeting
- 5) Matters Arising (signed off)
- 6) Branch President – Lt Col CA Le Hardy (Introduction)
- 7) Chairman's Report - SW
- 8) *Treasurer's Report with BFI total – AK. We need to ensure that our branch accounts show the totals held on behalf of the RBL Branch Funds and the Welfare Funds are separate. We can use Branch Funds however we like to support our aims. I suspect that after all the hassle we had with the previous incumbents we only have the one account. £1500 to go into Branch General Account and the remainder to be used for Charitable Purposes, e.g. RBL Courses, Comforts, welfare etc.*
- 9) Secretary's Report - DC
- 10 PF – PY 100 Update from YT Council. *Permission granted to plant tree, but not in Soldiers' Plot as that is CWGC property. I have stated the urgency to the council on this and they are 100% behind the idea. I am in contact with the necessary officials to meet them within one month to site the tree. I need to write to LFAL formerly to thank them. Who should we have as the V.I.P. for this? I shall now formally request RNAS Yeovilton for the provision of two Warrant Officers to plant two of the trees. I intend to offer a tree to the YESS Club.
Chairman to now write to the schools. We will have 16-30 other graves to commemorate so we do not need many schoolchildren, but it doesn't matter HOW MANY children there are per tree.
Provision of Poppies or wreaths. Does the branch need to pay for them if we get them from the Poppy Appeal organizer?
Chair to write to St. John's ambulance to see if they would like to voluntarily participate in the provision of 2 x First Aiders.*
11. DC – Equipment Purchase – do we have an Assets Register and what do we have on it? I assume the Branch Flag and Accoutrements are there. Who holds the badges for the committee e.g. Chair, Vice Chair etc.?
12. DC – Quiz Night?
13. PF – United Reformed Church – Any update? *All quiet on this one at present.*
14. PF - Any LIBOR update? *I have sent out a Press Release to the West Gaz and the Breeze radio and I await an outcome. I have given my email and telephone number as the contact for any possible participants, but when you think that the youngest would now be 87 years of age, I do not expect a large response, if any at all.*
15. MS 1 – sign and submit and DC to send to County
16. Remembrance Sunday – any known issues thus far?

- 17. USA Memorial and total route clearance – Chairman to contact and liaise with A and S Police in respect of cones and tape off area.**
- 18. SW - Order of Precedence for Civic party to be revised / enforced**
- 19. Military Parade / display on Saturday 10th Nov.**
- 20. Items / Ideas for next meeting (AoB). *Poppy briefing – what goes on in our town regarding this?***
- 21. Date / Time for next meeting**
- 22. Closing Act of Remembrance**

ITEM 003

May 2018

By 1st May 2018 the committee was in place and were as follows:

President: Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Christopher Le Hardy.

Chairman: Simon Woodrow.

Vice Chairman: Peter Forrester.

Secretary: Dan Crooke.

Treasurer: Andy Kendall.

Committee Members

Bruce Trigger. Formerly ex-President of the branch.

Tricia Hymas. In a passive but supporting role.

Craig Price – also Standard Bearer.

Kate Penny – elected February 2019.

Poppy Appeal Organiser – Paul Bunce.

Branch Bugler – Darren Lintern.

Branch Padre – Keith Stevens.

ITEM 004

2nd June 2018

On the 2nd June 2018 we came screaming and dragged ourselves into the 21st century when the Secretary, Dan Crooke, created the Face Book page for us, and it is located at:

YEOVIL RBL

ITEM 005

PROJECT YEOVIL 100 – EXTRACT FROM THE WESTERN GAZETTE DATED
THURSDAY JULY 5TH 2018

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 2018 **Western Gazette**

Pupils to help legion mark centenary

THE Yeovil and district branch of the Royal British Legion has announced its plans to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War in November.

The event, which is called Project Yeovil 100, will involve students from schools across the town and surrounding area.

Branch chairman Simon Woodrow explained: "This is an event designed specifically to commemorate the centenary anniversary of the armi-

stice, where major hostilities ceased for World War I.

"We intend to commemorate the sacrifice and loss of all those in that dreadful period, along with those that, since that day, have succumbed to their injuries.

"It is also intended to act as an educational reminder to the younger generations of today, of the sacrifice made by so many, in the name of peace, so far away from their homelands."

A ceremony will be held at Yeovil Cemetery in Preston Road on Thursday, November 8, when wreaths or poppy crosses will be laid on each of the known First World War graves. An oak tree, which will be provided by the Life for a Life memorial organisation, will also be planted.

The event itself, is being researched and planned primarily by branch deputy chairman Peter Forrester who is a local historical expert on the location and siting of war graves.

Descendants of troops are invited to special tree planting ceremony

THE Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion is appealing for descendants of local men who died in the First World War who are buried in the town's cemetery to get in touch.

The branch would like family members to join them at a tree planting ceremony to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. It is being held next Thursday (November 8).

There are 19 First World War graves but others who died are buried in family graves.

War graves: Frederick Ernest Chant, Thomas John Ambrose (Jack) Denmead, Joseph Dodge, James Walter Fone, Edwin Giles Hawkins, Leaguer John Jackson, Arthur Douglas Kemp Jones, Frederick Jury, Frederick John Major, Daniel Britton Norman, Frederick James Norris, James Plympton, Edgar Albert Rattle, George Herbert Rendell, Silvester Joe Ricketts, Charles Samways, Cecil Frank Sims, William Frank Sweet and Clarence Endicott Tucker.

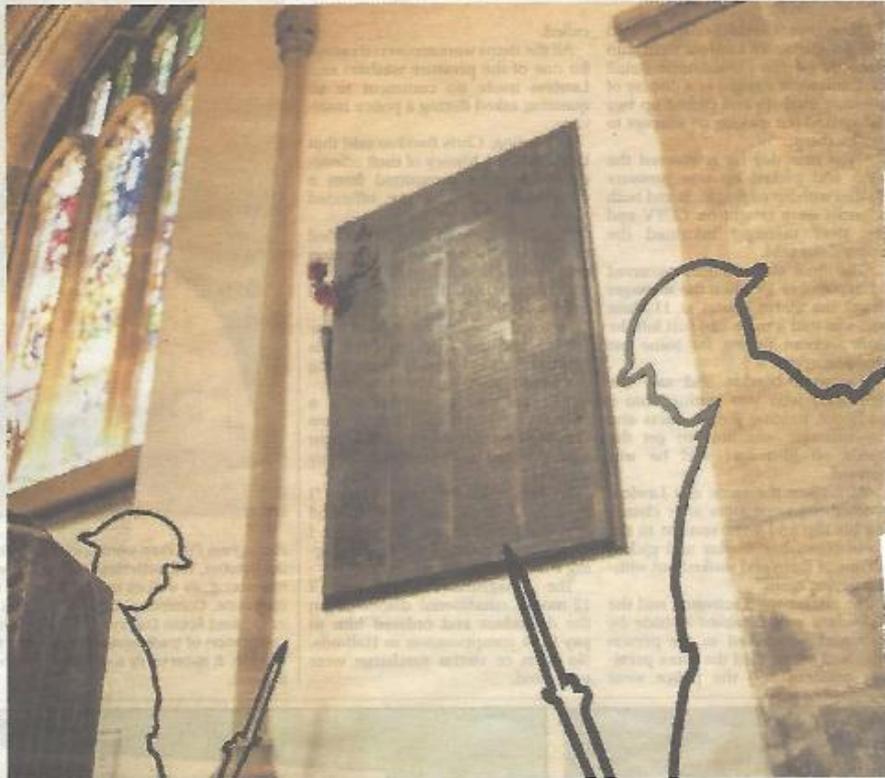
Family graves: Walter Horace Adams, Richard Ewart Andrew, Kenneth Shortland Aplin, Lionel Richard Burns, Caleb Fdney Newis, Wilfred Stanley Gordon Payne, Frederick Harold Rendell, Clifford Stanley Rooks, Ernest George Scriven and brothers Percy Lionel and Stanley James Winsor.

The event is the brainchild of branch vice-chairman Peter Forrester, who is a former Royal Marines warrant officer. He is passionate about his hobby, Somerset soldiers of the Great War and has built up a database of short biographies of more than 12,500 Somerset and Bristol soldiers and war memorial details.

In many ways Peter epitomises the life-long commitment brought by the Royal British Legion to former comrades in arms.

Those buried in Yeovil and other communities remind us that an armistice does not cease the suffering caused in warfare.

The Yeovil ceremony coincides with the RNAS Yeovilton Remembrance parade, part of which is a fly-past by historical aircraft which will hopefully pass over the cemetery at



Silhouettes of World War 1 soldiers in Sherborne Abbey flank the names of the fallen

around 11am. Among the guests will be the Lord Lieutenant Annie Maw, the Deputy Lieutenant, Brigadier David Godsal, Yeovil MP Marcus Fysh and Lt Col Artur Miskiewicz, the deputy defence, military, naval and air attaché at the Polish embassy.

Altogether there are 75 graves in the cemetery with a military connection. Many are Commonwealth war graves from the Second World War; some are private burial sites that remember servicemen and civilians

from all the armed services that died in conflict across the world or returned home, only to die either of their wounds or accidents.

Some succumbed to the Spanish Influenza while on leave from the trenches and others died from TB, consumption or natural causes.

There are two holders of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, second only to the Victoria Cross.

One is Warrant Officer Ricketts who won his DCM in the First War

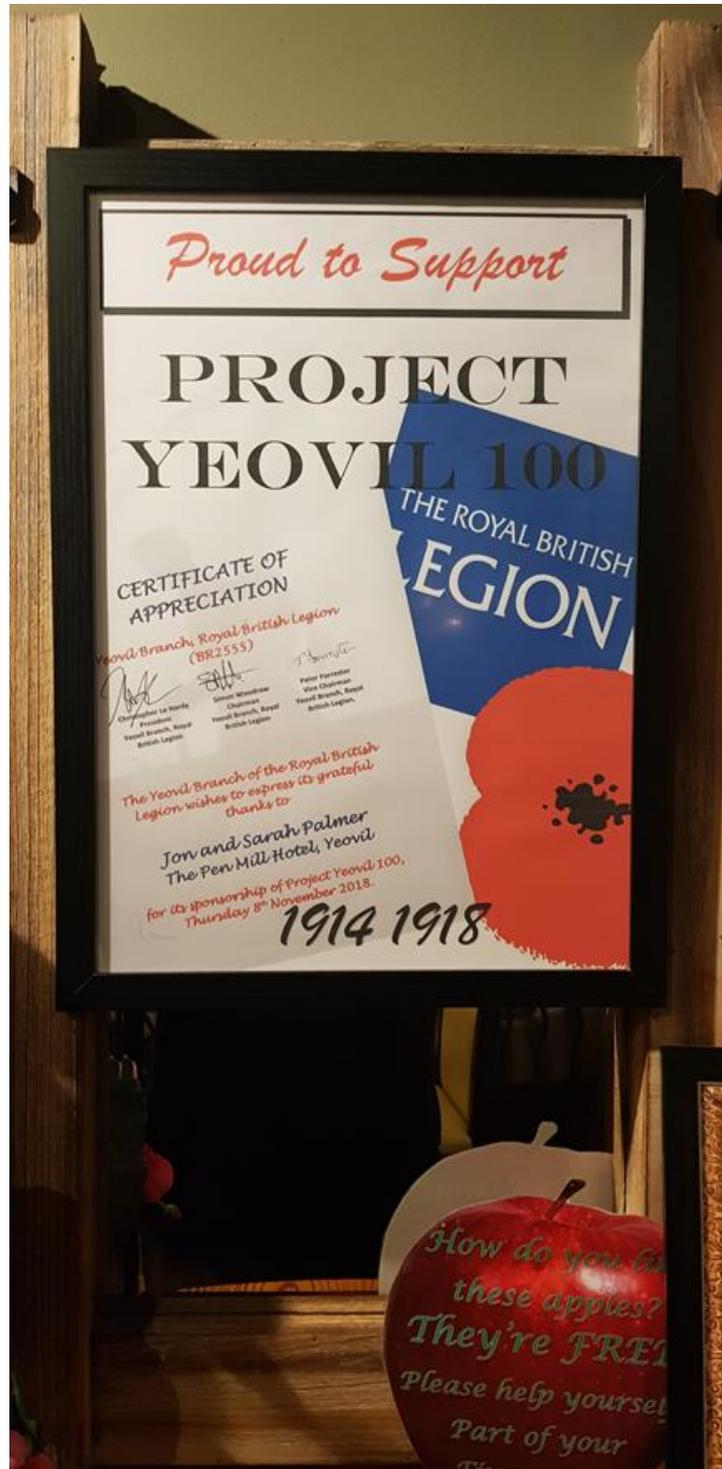
and died aged 65. The other, Leaguer John Jackson died in 1926 of his wounds received at Solva Bay.

The tree has been donated by Life for a Life Memorial Forests and will be maintained by them for 15 years.

If you are a relative of any of the men who died in the First World War and are buried in Yeovil Cemetery and would like to attend the commemorative event contact Peter Forrester 01935 428839; email peterf707@aol.com

ITEM 007

8TH NOVEMBER 2018 – CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION AWARDED TO THE PEN MILL HOTEL, YEOVIL, FOR SUPPORTING PROJECT 100. THEY DISPLAYED THEIR OWN CERTIFICATE!



ITEM 008

PROGRAMME FOR PROJECT YEOVIL 100 THURSDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2018

The cemetery can be found alongside Preston Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3AG, Grid Reference ST 551 165, Global Positioning System co-ordinates 50° 56' 45.81" North, 2° 38' 24.56" West.

0945. R.B.L. Helpers arrive. Check marker flags are in position.

1015. Arrival of school children and military guests. All assemble in the left-hand Chapel in the cemetery.

Biographies of the 19 World War One Servicemen buried in the cemetery on display – PF. Tea/coffee/light bites for guests will be available in the cemetery chapel after the event finishes.

1030-1100. Each individual school and RNAS Yeovil representatives given Remembrance Crosses and conducted to a grave pre-marked by a Royal British Legion flag.

1035. Arrival of Lord-Lieutenant Mrs Annie Maw + Vice Lord-Lieutenant Brigadier David Godsall M.B.E., D.L., Marcus Fysh M.P., His Worship the Mayor and Madam Mayoress, Mr and Mrs Recardo, and other dignitaries. Met by Branch President, Lt. Col. (Retd.) Christopher Le Hardy.

Lord Lt's Car parked in reserved space by Chapel. *Note: the position of the tree is some 250 metres up from the Chapel and a slight incline, so the Lord Lieutenant might prefer to be driven up to it.

1050 – Move from Chapel to tree (about 250 metres walk) – allow 5 minutes.

R.N.A.S. Yeovilton Fly Past (weather permitting). 2 x Wildcat helicopters.

1059. Chairman gives Exhortation.

1100. Bugler plays the Last Post.

2 minutes silence.

On completion of 2 minutes silence (timed by Branch Chairman) Bugler Plays Reveille. When bugle call ceases, children place Poppy Crosses on their designated graves. All invited back to tree for ceremony. Allow maximum of 10 minutes for this to happen.

Press photographs.

On completion: Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion Padre (Mr. Keith Stevens) blesses tree and Lord Lieutenant unveils plaque.

Followed by the laying of wreaths by (in order):

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Somerset, Mrs Annie Maw unveils plaque and lays wreath.

Her Majesty's Vice Lord-Lieutenant for Somerset, Brigadier David Hugh Godsall, M.B.E., D.L.

Marcus Fysh, M.P. for Yeovil.

His Worship the Mayor of Yeovil, Mr. David Recardo and Madam Mayoress, Mrs. Yvonne Recardo.

Lt Col Artur Miskiewicz, Deputy Defence, Military, Naval and Air Attaché, Embassy of Poland

Norman Armstrong-Kersh, M.B.E., KCOM.

Somerset Chairman, Major (Retd.) Robert McDonald.

Branch President, Lt. Col. (Retd.) Christopher Le Hardy.

Peter Cousins, Yeovil Ex-Service's, and Social Club representative.

Barchester Health representative.

Joanna and Adrian Bogunski – Polish community representatives.

Andy Pymmer, Managing Director of Wessex Water Services.

On completion, Lt Col Artur Miskiewicz, Deputy Defence, Military, Naval and Air Attaché, Embassy of Poland, will lay a wreath on the grave of Jan Lewandowski, who was a member of the Polish Free Navy during World War Two. The family of Jan, who will be in attendance, will then lay crosses of remembrance on his grave.

1120. Event ceases. Children returned to school.

Principal guests return to Chapel for light finger buffett/tea/coffee

Lord Lieutenant introduced to Norman Armstrong-Kersh, M.B.E., K.C.O.M., Chief Executive, Life for a Life Memorial Forests (donors of tree).

Presentation of plaques to Life for a Life and Cemetery Committee.

WREATHS PROVIDED BY YEOVIL RBL FOR:

1. Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Somerset, Mrs. Annie Maw.
2. Her Majesty's Vice Lord-Lieutenant for Somerset, Brigadier David Hugh Godsall, M.B.E., D.L.
3. Mr. Marcus Fysh, M.P.
4. His Worship the Mayor of Yeovil and Madam Mayoress, Mr. Dave Recardo and Mrs. Yvonne Recardo.
5. Lt Col Artur Miskiewicz, Polish Embassy.
6. Mr. Norman Armstrong-Kersh, M.B.E., K.C.O.M., Chief Executive, Life for a Life Memorial Forests.
7. Somerset Chairman, Mr. Robert McDonald.
8. Branch President, Lt. Col. (Retd.) Christopher Le Hardy
9. Mr Philip D'Arcy, Yeovil Ex-Service's, and Social Club Chairman.
10. Barchester Health Representative – Sheila, accompanied by Sarah Purdy.
11. Joanna and Adrian Bogunski – Polish community representatives.
12. Andy Pymmer, Managing Director of Wessex Water Services.
13. Helena Ledwandowski and Turina Gardiner.

CROSSES TO MARK GRAVES PROVIDED BY YEOVIL RBL FOR:

1. Oaklands Primary.
2. Birchfield Primary.
3. Preston Primary.
4. Milford Infants
5. Bucklers Mead Academy.
6. Westfield Academy.
7. St. Michael's Academy.

CROSSES PROVIDED FOR:

1. Two Servicemen from Yeovil.
2. Yeovil Schoolchildren.
3. Helena Ledwandowski and Turina Gardiner and great grandchildren.

Historical afternote: The idea for Project Yeovil 100 was the Vice Chair's, and he organised the whole event. The Oak tree was donated by the Life for a Life Charity. Right next to where the tree was to be planted, an ex-serviceman from the Polish Navy happened to be planted. After some while the daughters of Jan Ledwandowski were located and the Polish Embassy invited to send an officer to lay a wreath, which occurred. For the first time, the Polish community in Yeovil were invited to attend and they also laid a wreath at the oak tree.

ITEM 009

PROJECT YEOVIL 100 – THE PLANTING OF THE TREE IN YEOVIL CEMETERY.

EXTRACT FROM THE WESTERN GAZETTE DATED THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 2018.



The Oak tree was donated to the Yeovil Branch RBL by the Life for a Life charity and planted by the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant.

The Royal British Legion Oak situated at the top end of the Yeovil Cemetery.



ITEM 010

YEOVIL RBL BRANCH STATISTICS AS AT 14TH NOVEMBER 2018

Total Branch Membership = **72**

34 members contactable + 7 committee members + branch president = **42** members contactable. *1 address contains 2 multi-contacts. **1 address contains 3 multi-contacts + non branch members, padre + PAO = **44 email contacts.**

DEMOGRAPHICS OF BRANCH

| DATES OF BIRTH | NO | AGE RANGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 1921-1930 | 5 | Over 88 years |
| 1931-1940 | 11 | Over 78 years |
| 1941-1950 | 15 | Over 68 years |
| 1951-1960 | 10 | Over 58 years |
| 1961-1970 | 10 | Over 48 years |
| 1971-1980 | 4 | Over 38 years |
| 1981-1990 | 2 | Over 28 years |
| 1991 onwards | 0 | Over 18 years. |
| Age Not Known | 15 | |
| Total | 72 | |

ITEM 011

16TH NOVEMBER 2018 – CERTIFICATE AWARDED TO SANDRA HOUSE, OF ELEANOR BRIDAL, PROM & BALL GOWN SHOP, PRINCESS STREET, YEOVIL, FOR BEST BRITISH LEGION THEMED WINDOW DISPLAY.

The window depicted a field of crosses. Each cross bore the name of a soldier from WW1 whose named appears on the Yeovil war memorial in the Borough.



Vice Chair Peter Forrester presents the award on the 22nd November 2019.



ITEM 012

Friday 4th December 2018

Yeovil and District Branch

Royal British Legion

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Thursday 4th December 2018 at the Yeovil Ex-Services and Social Club at 1930hrs

Committee members present at Meeting:

Pete Forrester (Vice-Chairman), Daniel Croke (Secretary), Christopher Le-Hardy (Branch President).

Apologies:

1. Unfortunately the Chairman has unexpectedly fallen ill so the Vice-Chair will be chairing the A.G.M.
2. I have 4 apologies for non-attendance, including the Treasurer, who had to attend a council meeting at short notice.
3. There were 7 ordinary members, 3 branch officer's and 1 committee member in attendance. A total of 11 people.

Vice-Chairman's opening remarks:

- Questions to be asked at the end of the meeting.

Minutes of previous meeting:

There are no minutes from last year's AGM.

Presidents Address on External Affairs.

- Thank you to committee members
- Gave members present a potted history of the events held by the branch over 2018.
- Laid out the ambitions of the branch for the coming year concentrating on welfare.
- Highlighted the need for new branch members.

Chairman Report (delivered by the Vice-Chairman):

- Branch now on a sound footing.
- Members are compliant with national standards
- Regular meetings are now held bi-monthly.
- Thankful of a substantive committee membership for support and guidance.
- Thank you to Branch President Christopher Le-Hardy.
- Vice-Chairman Pete Forrester to carry out the role of Branch Officer.
- Chairman has carried out upwards of 20-30 befriending visits.
- Requests have been made from several organisations for lectures and liaison visits
- Chairman spends a considerable amount of time on branch work.

Vice-Chairman's Report.

- Project Yeovil 100 was an outstanding success with positive feedback by all involved.
- Remembrance Day was another success with the new memorial with over 50 names added.
- Branch Facebook page is now active.
- Annual trophy to be presented for the best dressed window at Remembrance.

Members encouraged to post suggestions on the Facebook page.

Treasurers Report (AK):

- Treasurer was not present but branch accounts have approximately £5000.

Secretary's Report (DC):

- Thanks the committee for the opportunity to be secretary and wished to continue.
- Grateful for the opportunity to be Standard Bearer at the Remembrance parade.

- Window display in the Library for 17th December 2018.
Poppy Appeal Organiser (PB)
- Paul Bunce not present but did let the committee know that counting is still ongoing.

- ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN – no other applicants. Situation put to the members present and current incumbent unanimously elected to serve a further term of 3 years. Pete Forrester to be in post for the next three years.

ELECTION OF MEMBERSHIP MEMBER – no applicants.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER – no applicants.

County Conference motion

- Motion to return welfare to the ‘grass roots’ level.
- o Proposed: Christopher Le-Hardy
- o Seconded: Oliver Wilson-Chalon
- o Unanimously AGREED

Delegate for County and Annual Conferences

- Chairman expresses wish to attend.
- o Proposed: Oliver Wilson-Chalon
- o Seconded: Roger Law
- o Unanimously AGREED

A.O.B

- It was raised that it would be preferable for the Branch to have a regular social area to meet. This would give the public, members, and those perhaps in need of welfare a known point of contact.

AFTER ACTIONS.

1. 2 members re-joined the branch. Email already sent to Kate Hurley.
 2. Two motions to be forwarded to RBL County HQ.
 3. Mr. Wilson-Chalon asked for a copy of the terms of reference for a committee member. PF said there was a copy on the branch notice board but he would publish it on the Facebook site. As there has been no volunteer to fill the committee space, the committee now has the authority to co-opt a member on to the committee.
 4. The motion is: "That Mrs Kate Adams be co-opted as an ordinary committee member of the Yeovil RBL.
- Unanimously AGREED by committee.

S. WOODROW

Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion
Chairman.

Date:

ITEM 013

Friday 20th December 2018.

FUNERAL OF MR. STEWART R. KINGDOM, ex Falkland Islands Veteran, who suffered from PTSD, had committed suicide and he was cremated on this day. After a national appeal started by the Crewkerne Branch RBL, the sad event was eventually over-subscribed, ex-services, current servicemen and woman and civilian well-wishers attended.

RBL Standards and other Corps Standards were paraded and the final goodbye to Stewart took place before a packed crematorium.

The Chair and Vice Chair represented RBL Yeovil Branch.

ITEM 014
OUTREACH VILLAGES



LIVE ON
TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN
AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING



YEovil BRANCH, ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
(BR 2555)

Vice Chairman, Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion
38, St. Michael's Road
Yeovil
Somerset
BA21 5AG

Telephone: 0796 8567583
e-mail: peterf707@aol.com

7th January 2019

Dear Parish Council,

The Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion has recently re-organised its branch outreach activities and the following parishes now affiliated to it for branch membership and ex-services and family welfare:

Brympton
Chilthorne Domer*
Chilton Cantelo and Ashington
East Chinnock
Ilchester
Limington
Marston Magna
Mudford
Queen Camel
Rimpton
Sparkford
Stoke Sub Hamdon
Tintinhull *
Yeovil
Yeovil Without
Yeovilton

*will come under Yeovil branch when Tintinhull formally closes shortly.

It is requested that you display the attached poster on your Parish Noticeboard so that your local population is aware of this.

Additionally, one of the Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion is always willing to talk to Parish Councils or local communities about what we do and what our purpose is. If you would like for this to happen, please feel free to talk to me.

Peter Forrester
Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary
Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion

ITEM 015

10th February 2019

BRANCH PRESIDENTS OPEN LETTER PUBLISHED ON THE RBL YEOVIL FACEBOOK PAGE.

From: Christopher Le Hardy, Hon President, Yeovil Branch

10th February 2019

Dear Member,

As your appointed Hon President may I offer New Year Seasons greetings to you and your families. I wanted to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on our activities and the future branch plans. What we need now is to rebuild our welfare capabilities, providing more assistance to the vulnerable ex forces and their families, to increase membership, and deliver a new education programme for future generations.

The first thing you need to know is that Yeovil RBL is going through a process of revitalisation and renewal. You are now being served by a hard-working and very loyal Committee. Simon Woodrow: Chairman, Welfare Officer and Remembrance Sunday Parade Commander/Chief Organiser – saw amazing turnout and support from the population; Peter Forrester: Vice Chairman led the RBL YEOVIL 100 Commemoration Event for End of WW1. This was a significant event that commemorated the 19 WW1 graves in Yeovil Town Cemetery. We also recognised our Polish Allies and the Polish Community; and through projects we also engaged the children of 7 Yeovil Schools. The Somerset Lord Lieutenant and Vice Lord Lieutenant presided, Annie Maw warmly complimented the branch on organising the event. Andy Kendall: Treasurer, has rebuilt the Branch Finances; Paul Bunce: Poppy Appeal and Welfare Officer has had another stupendous year as the organiser of the Poppy Appeal and has been heavily committed to welfare. Dan Crook: Secretary, brings much needed youth and ideas. All of them have given up their time and really worked hard on your behalf to restore the reputation and general state of your Branch.

You can now find news about our activities, meetings, and future plans on line at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Royal-British-Legion-Yeovil/464773366878087> This is an easy and quick way of keeping in touch. Please register the address on your computer or telephone.

Membership

For a variety of reasons our membership has shrunk to around 75 members. Yeovil and its surrounding villages have one of the highest concentrations of past and present service men and women in the South West. But you do not have to be ex forces to join the RBL. Moreover, anyone who has served even one day is entitled to RBL support if they need it. You can help us by sending this email on to your friends and families asking them to join us. We are asking each existing member to find at least 6 new members.

How to join: The RBL membership website is the easiest way to join. The cost for Yeovil is £19.00. <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/membership/become-a-member/>

What about the future?

First of all, we need your endorsement, support, and help in three different ways, Welfare - Help for the vulnerable, Programme of Events - supporting and attending; and joining us at Commemoration Events.

The MOST IMPORTANT is Welfare Support. 5% of the population of Somerset have a military connection. Somerset is one of the lead counties nationally for the integration of Health, Care and Welfare. The programmes of integration need the support of charities like the Royal British Legion (The 3rd Sector) to help to deliver Health and Well Being. Whilst there is now a national point of contact for the forces (<https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/>) if they need help there is a small team of trained welfare officers, for Somerset and Wiltshire. But are they reaching all of the vulnerable and their families. We read of these sad cases in the press and on the news almost every day.

How you can help: We need our members to become the eyes and ears of the RBL. Everyone involved in care needs to ask those that are vulnerable: “Have you ever served in HM Forces”, if so there is help out there through the Royal British Legion? You can help us find those in difficulty and bring in that support.

Veterans Support Group Yeovil. Thanks to Paul Bunce this group has now been formed in Yeovil. “We are a friendly group of ex-Service people, including ex-Emergency Services, who meet up to socialise, share experiences and help each other find support in the community. They meet on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7pm, and have a social get-together on the 1st Saturday at 1pm. Both are held at the YESS Club, Legion Road, Yeovil BA21 3AZ.

A tribute. A funeral in the season of hope that is Christmas is never a good thing. But I do feel I must bring reader’s attention to the death of Stewart Kingdon. He received a tremendous send off from over 250 friends from the British Legion branches marshalled by Crewkerne and Yeovil branches on Friday 22 December in Yeovil. The second reason is that we should not shy away from the fact that his death was from suicide. His passing brings into stark relief the harsh reality that too many ex -soldiers are taking their own lives. In his annual address the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), at the RUSI, on 11th Dec 18 dwelt upon the myths and the reality of life in the Armed Forces saying “So while our servicemen and women appreciate public support, they want to be valued and respected – not pitied – in other words it’s about empathy not sympathy.” Stewart was for a long time a soldier in the Royal Army Medical Corps with several tours in Northern Ireland and he served in the Falklands Campaign. Thanks to the RBL, his MP and others he was valued and respected. Is that not what it is all about?

Shortly, we will be publishing an Annual Programme of Events and Commemoration. We will be starting a programme of talks in community and village halls to help understanding of serving in the military; an ambitious programme for school children and students is under discussion, as are more social events. 6 June 2019 is the 75th anniversary of D-Day to liberate France and Europe; Saturday 29 June 2019, Armed Forces Day is a chance to show your support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community. There are many ways for people, communities, and organisations across the country to show their support and get involved, from attending an event or joining us online to throwing a party or

local event. We are asking shops to place a display each November and the Remembrance Sunday is 10 November 2019.

Poppy Appeal

Finally, I would like to personally thank the people of Yeovil for their generous support for the Poppy Appeal. This year you raised £21,000 from over 540 different locations. I particularly wish to say on your behalf a heartfelt thank you to all the wonderful volunteers that were out helping in all weathers and across the towns and villages over two weeks in November.

For RBL Yeovil 2018 has been a landmark year in so many ways. Thanks to your Chairman and the Committee we can honestly say that the Yeovil Branch has now recovered and continues to rebuild and revive. Together there is much more we can do. So, I do ask for your help in increasing our membership, and please let us know of any ex-servicemen and women and their families in need of help.

Thank you again,

Yours Sincerely

ITEM 016

EXTRACT FROM COUNTY NEWSLETTER FOR MAY 2019 – PAGES 10/11.

YEOVIL BRANCH RESPONDS TO A FAST BALL

It all started with a casual phone call from the Yeovil Ex-Services and Social Club when the Secretary said to me that they had received a letter addressed to us. With nothing much on and a fancy for a pint, I walked the mile (well, meandered really) up to the Club and received the letter.

Taking a casual sip out of my pint I suddenly grasped the urgency of the matter. This was at 9 p.m. on Wednesday 13th March, and we were being asked to lay a wreath on the Yeovil war memorial on behalf of a 95 years old veteran in Wales who could not make it to the event.

A couple of quick phone calls and the outline of the event was hastily put into being. We then had to wait to get permission from the Town Council (whose war memorial it is) to lay this wreath. This was duly obtained on Friday 15th March.

A quick recce of the war memorial, and a risk assessment being made, the local police were informed of the event, whilst I used the Yeovil RBL Facebook page to try and find out if any relatives of the man we were remembering were still living in Yeovil. Alas this had no result so, having organised our Branch Padre, Keith Stevens, we quickly assembled around the war memorial at 12 noon on Sunday March 17th, where the Branch Standard was paraded.

There followed a brief dedication prayer in remembrance of those lost in this particular action. On completion a poppy wreath and an article I had written about the event, were placed alongside the memorial. Job done!

Peter Forrester
Yeovil Branch

D/JX365589 Able Seaman Douglas William
Raymond MASTERS, RN
His Majesties Landing Craft Infantry (L) 273
667th Landing Craft (Mechanised) Flotilla.
Killed in action on the 17th March 1944, aged 19
years.
He is remembered on the Plymouth Naval
Memorial, Plymouth Hoe,
Devon, panel 87, column 1.

The wreath was laid.



ITEM 017

**WEDNESDAY, 29TH MAY 2019
REMEMBRANCE SERVICE FOR LORD PADDY ASHDOWN**



On the left is the Branch Chair, Simon Woodrow, and on the right, the Branch Vice Chair, Peter Forrester. Both attended the memorial service held in St. John's Church, Yeovil, to commemorate the life of Lord Paddy Ashdown. He was a strong supporter of the Yeovil Branch of the Royal British Legion.

ITEM 018

Thursday 30th May 2019

POPPY APPEAL RESULTS PUBLISHED

POPPY APPEAL 2018.

The national Poppy Appeal for 2018 raised:

£50, 031, 805.41p.

Of this, Somerset supplied:

£982, 735.81p.

The Yeovil area raised:

£23, 415.

ITEM 019

**D DAY REMEMBRANCE PARADE 1100HRS THURSDAY 6TH JUNE 2019
PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE WESTERN GAZETTE DATED THURSDAY, JUNE 13TH,
2019**



The Mayoral party is assembled. Committee member Bruce Trigger (the mayor's yeoman) is seen holding the mace of office. Bruce was also a past President and current Branch Committee member.



The branch president, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Christopher Le Hardy, gives the D Day facts and figures.



The President, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Christopher Le Hardy, lays his wreath whilst the Vice Chair, Peter Forrester, patiently awaits his turn to lay another wreath on behalf of the American troops based in and around Yeovil who went to the Normandy beach-head.

Day anniversary

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019 Western Gazette



The Yeovil Branch RBL Chair, Simon Woodrow, bows his head in acknowledgement of those lost just before he read the final exhortation.

The Yeovil and District Branch of the Royal British Legion, led by the Branch President Lt Col (Retd) CA Le Hardy, Chairman Simon Woodrow, and Vice Chairman Peter Forrester, held a short service of Remembrance at 11am on June 6 at the War Memorial in Yeovil town centre to remember the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day landings, Operation Overlord, that marked the beginning of the liberation of German-occupied Western Europe and ultimately led to the end of the Second World War. PICTURES BY Len Copland



The poppies laid by the Mayor of Yeovil and the RBL Yeovil Branch President.

The written piece of paper remembers Private Willcocks who lost his life on the 7th June 1944 at Pegasus Bridge.

The wreath to the American Forces from Yeovil who left for D Day was placed upon their memorial, next to the Borough main war memorial, by the Vice Chair, Peter Forrester.



ITEM 020

SOMERSET ARMED FORCES COVENANT PARTNERSHIP Held in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, 40 Commando Royal Marines, Norton Manor Camp, Taunton, on Tuesday 25th June 2019.

The Vice Chair, Peter Forrester, attended the annual all-day Somerset Armed Forces Covenant Partnership meeting which was held in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, 40 Commando Royal Marines, Norton Manor Camp, Taunton.

The main topics discussion were the MOD Veterans Strategy and Veterans suicides.

ITEM 021

PITTARDS POPPY

Thursday 27th June 2019



The Pittards Poppy will be a trophy donated by the local leather company of Pittards Ltd., in Yeovil, Somerset. It is a perpetual trophy and is to be competed for annually in the Yeovil and surrounding areas for the best poppy display.

It is for the best dressed shop window, public or school display in our areas of responsibility.

The winners will hold the trophy for a year, returning it in time for the next competition in the following year.

The Vice Chair, Peter Forrester, attended a meeting at Pittards leather factory to view and approve the poppies. They will be placed upon a varnished wooden stand with room for us to put a plaque on it.

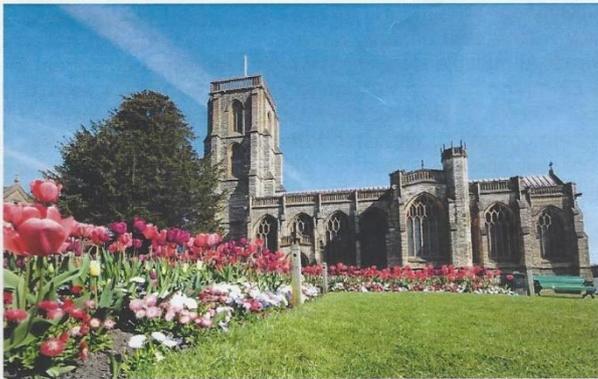
ITEM 022

MAYORS CIVIC CEREMONY St. John's Church, Yeovil, at 1500 hours.

The Vice Chair, Peter Forrester, attended the Mayors Civic Service on behalf of the Yeovil Branch, RBL. The event was held in the St. John's Church, Yeovil, at 1500 hours on Sunday 30th June 2019.



Civic Service Sunday 30th June 2019



ITEM 023

3 BASE CHARITY RIDE

30th June 2019

St. Clears Branch RBL staged a 3 base charity cycle ride in aid of the Poppy Appeal. They left RAF Brize Norton on Armed Forces Day 29th June and cycled to Tidworth via Royal Wootton Bassett. On Sunday 30th June they cycled to RNAS Yeovilton, arriving there at about 1700 hours, and were greeted by the Yeovil RBL Vice Chair, Peter Forrester.

The Branch Chair, Simon Woodrow, paid a surprise visit to the team in Carmarthen, Wales,



on Friday 22nd June 2019 and met the team whilst they were fund-raising for the event.



The event was completed safely, although on Saturday 29th June 2019 the team had to endure an extremely hot day of 84°. After briefly stopping at the main gate of RNAS Yeovilton the team rode to the Ilchester Arms by 1630 hours where they were greeted by the Vice Chair, Peter Forrester. The owners of the Ilchester Arms graciously made available a room so that the men could get a shower. After a couple of pints of cider they returned to Wales by means of the minibus they were using.

ITEM 024

VE DAY 75

Tuesday 9th July 2019

1. The Vice Chair, RBL Yeovil, attended a Yeovil Town Council Promotions and Activities Committee meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 9th July 2019 in the Town House at 19 Union Street, Yeovil.
2. VE Day was discussed at Item 10/19, and the Vice Chair was asked to give an input regarding this item. He explained that the reason for him attending the meeting was on behalf of the Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion as we did not want to organise an event if the Town Council would be doing so.
3. It was resolved at the meeting that a Steering Group would be formed to organise the VE Day event on Friday 8th May 2020. It was agreed at this meeting that an event would take place and the venue would be Nine Springs Country Park. The Vice Chair was invited to represent the Royal British Legion on this Steering Group to which he agreed. I pointed out a letter that was sent by the VE DAY 75 organiser – **it is quite clear that the charity nominated to benefit from this event is to be SSAFA.** However, the Vice Chair is going to encourage a Poppy Appeal presence be acceptable, probably by having the Poppy Appeal tent there.
4. Sally Freemantle, a town council officer, will contact the Vice Chair with the details of the first planning meeting.
5. The VE DAY 75 is leading the way ahead nationally. So far the events planned are:
Friday (Bank Holiday) 8th May.
3 p.m. The playing of THE BATTLE'S O'ER from the 4 highest peaks in Britain. ***Can we get a piper to play at the country park?***
3 p.m. Pubs and clubs will be encouraged to raise their glass to drink a toast to the heroes of WW2. Pubs and Clubs can download the Certificate of Appreciation themselves. The branch will be writing to the pubs and clubs in Yeovil and the outreach areas to encourage them to participate. www.veday75.org.
6.55 p.m. A Cry for Peace around the World. Town Criers throughout the world will be reciting a "Cry". **Town Crier?**
7 p.m. Bells in churches and cathedrals will be ringing a peal.
7 p.m. onwards. Parties and celebrations.
Saturday 9th May.
Parties and celebrations.
Sunday 10th May.
10.30 a.m. Church services throughout the land. ***Check with St. John's Church.***

ITEM 025

BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 25th July 2019

Committee Meeting Agenda
YEOVIL AND DISTRICT BRANCH
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
1930hrs – 25 Jul 19
West Abbey Care Home, Yeovil

1. Act of Remembrance by Chairman
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of Last Meeting
5. Matters Arising (If not, sign off)
6. Signing of Year's Minutes
7. Chairman's Report
8. Vice Chairman's Report :
 1. Pittard's Poppy
 2. Mobile PA,
 3. Committee Meeting Minutes to Facebook,
 4. Yeovil RBL History
 5. D-Day Rations idea
9. President's Matters
 1. Poppy Appeal totals
 2. Publicity project equipmentAny other matters
10. Treasurer's Report – S. Bearer eqpt listed on minutes
11. Secretary's Matters
12. Bruce TRIGGER – VE Day 2020 (Cry for Peace / Bells being sounded)
13. Next Agenda items (AoB)
14. Next Meeting Date for Sep 19
15. "Kohima" closing prayer by Chairman

ITEM 026

FUNERAL OF WW2 VETERAN

Friday 26th July 2019

The Yeovil Branch R.B.L. was represented by the Chair at the funeral of a D-Day veteran sailor from Martock, Sydney James Walsh, aged 97 years. A packed Yeovil Crematorium saw the veteran's body arrive, accompanied by motor-cyclists, and drove past paraded standards. Fellow veterans and serving service personnel were much in attendance. The event turned out to be a national one with television and media coverage.

R.N.A.S. Yeovilton's Base Warrant Officer, Baz Firth, co-ordinated the fly-past of the Merlin Helicopter, whilst the Branch Chair, Simon Woodrow, liaised with Colour Sergeant John Smith, Royal Marines, (the unit Mobile Air Operations Team of the Commando Helicopter Force) on the day to ensure that the timings were spot on.

THE WESTERN GAZETTE DATED THURSDAY 25TH JULY 2019, PAGE 14.

14

Supporters rally in response to an appeal over D-Day hero's funeral

MARTOCK

A D-Day veteran from Martock is to be given a hero's send off with a motorbike escort through Yeovil, after a funeral director's Facebook post went viral.

Sydney James Walsh, 97, (pictured right) passed away at La Fontana Care Home, Martock in June.

Mr Walsh served in the Royal Navy from January 1940 after signing up at Devonport in Plymouth. He served until March 31 1947 when he enrolled in the Royal Fleet Reserve. He served on many of Her Majesty's Ships and was on the Landing ship tank number 162 on the D-Day landings on 6th June 1944. Catherine and Stuart Foster, from Stuart Foster Funeral Service, decided to create a Facebook post inviting any current serving personnel and veterans to come to Mr Walsh's funeral to pay tribute. Trevor Handsworth, working alongside Mr Foster informed local veteran societies of the funeral.

A day after the Facebook post had been made, the post had 1,150 shares and more than 60,000 views.

Mr Foster and Mr Handsworth say they were overwhelmed and astonished by the amount of support. They have offers of four standard bearers, a bugle player and a motorbike escort from Mr Foster's office to Yeovil Crematorium for the funeral which is taking place tomorrow (Friday, July 26) at 1.30pm.

A Merlin Helicopter is also scheduled to do a fly-by on the day of Mr Walsh's funeral provided by RNAS Yeovilton.

Mr Foster said: "This reaction makes me proud to be part of this great nation, it shows what a wonderful community we live in, to show support for a truly heroic gentleman that served his country to allow us to have the freedom we have today.

"It is an honour and a privilege to provide Sydney with the funeral he deserves. We thank him for his service for our Queen and our Country. We also thank everybody for their kind messages and offers to attend."

ITEM 027

VE DAY 75 MEETING

Monday 29th July 2019

The Vice Chair attended a meeting in the Yeovil Town House as part of the Yeovil VE Day Commemoration Steering Group at 1500 hours.

ITEM 028

NEWSLETTER NUMBER THREE

1st August 2019

1. A lot has happened since the last newsletter and the Yeovil Branch RBL has been actively engaged with the community during this busy period.
2. The Branch Annual General Meeting took place in the Yeovil Ex-Services and Social Club on Friday 4th December 2018. Although the attendance was small, a very productive meeting took place.
3. One of the sadder tasks of the Yeovil RBL was to attend the funeral of an ex-serviceman who had been suffering from P.T.S.D. since the Falklands War and became another casualty of it when sadly the demons became too many and he took his own life. The funeral took place on Friday 20th December 2018. Rest in peace Stewart R. Kingdom.
4. After consultation with Somerset County R.B.L., and taking into consideration the gradual loss of other R.B.L. Branches, it was agreed that the following villages would come under the umbrella of R.B.L. Yeovil (new members welcome):

Brympton, Chilthorne Domer, Chilton Cantello & Ashington, East Chinnock, Ilchester, Limington, Marston Magna, Mudford, Queen Camel, Rimpton, Sparkford, Stoke sub Hamdon, Tintinhull, Yeovil Without and Yeovilton.
5. The Branch Presidents Open Letter dated 10th February 2019 was published on the Yeovil R.B.L. Facebook page.
6. At 12 noon on Sunday 17th March 2019, on the 75th anniversary of the sinking of H.M.L.C.I.(L), the branch gathered at the Yeovil Town Centre war memorial to lay a wreath of behalf of a 95 years old veteran living in Wales to commemorate his Yeovil chum, Able Seaman Douglas William Raymond Masters, Royal Navy. Despite appeals, we were unable to trace any of his relatives to join us at the ceremony.
7. On Wednesday 29th May 2019 the Branch Chair and Vice Chair attended a memorial service for Lord Paddy Ashdown held in St. John's Church, Yeovil. Paddy was a strong supporter of the Yeovil Branch.
8. The Poppy Appeal totals for 2018 were published on the 30th May 2019. Yeovil and its surrounding area raised a record £23,415.
9. The 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings was remembered at the Yeovil Town War Memorial, with the Mayor in attendance, on Thursday 6th June 2019. A wreath was also laid on the American War Memorial within the town.
10. The Yeovil R.B.L. Vice Chair attended the Somerset Armed Forces Covenant Partnership meeting in Norton Manor Camp, Taunton, the home of 40 Commando Royal Marines.

11. The Yeovil Branch R.B.L. Vice Chair attended the Mayor's Civic Ceremony held in St. John's Church, Yeovil.
12. On the 30th June, the Yeovil Branch R.B.L. were at the finish line in Ilchester to greet bicycle riders from Wales as they completed their 3 Base Charity Ride. It was the hottest day of the year at that point and the landlady of the Bull Inn, Ilchester, kindly let the lads have the use of a room so that they could all get a good cold shower and change into better drinking attire!
13. V.E. Day 75 falls on the 8th May 2020 and Yeovil Town will be stage an event on this Bank Holiday in Nine Springs Park. Yeovil Branch R.B.L. have been invited to join the committee overseeing the event and the Vice Chair will be its representative. Further details in the next newsletter.
14. During the course of the year a competitive trophy is being constructed and donated to the Yeovil R.B.L. by Pittards Plc, Yeovil. It takes the form of red leather poppies on stalks that are held within a wooden mount and with a brass plaque. Once the "Pittards Poppy" is completed, individuals and organisations within the Yeovil Branch and its outlying areas will be able to compete for it. It will be awarded on an annual basis, to be held for 10 months, for the best Remembrance Day Display or theme. More details will be published on how to enter the competition shortly.
15. On Friday 26th July 2019 the Yeovil Branch R.B.L. was represented by the Chair at the funeral of a D-Day veteran sailor from Martock, Sydney James Walsh, aged 97 years. A packed Yeovil Crematorium saw the veteran's body arrive, accompanied by motor-cyclists, and drove past paraded standards. Fellow veterans and serving service personnel were much in attendance.
16. Finally, during the 100 years celebrations to mark the end of World War One, a large number of cardboard/metal cut outs of WW1 soldiers were found throughout our area. Most of them have by now disappeared. The Yeovil Branch RBL can make use of them, so if you have one or two you would like to get rid of, please contact me and I will come and collect them from you.

ITEM 029

VETERAN'S FUNERAL

29th August 2019

The Chairman, Simon Woodrow, represented the Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion, at the funeral of ex-veteran Stephen Davies, aged 59 years. He had died unexpectedly and had only recently attend the funeral of WW2 D Day veteran Sydney Walsh.

ITEM 030

NATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PADDY ASHDOWN

10th September 2019



A memorial service for the late Lord Ashdown of Yeovil was held in Westminster Abbey on Tuesday 10th September 2019.

The Yeovil Branch Chair, Simon Woodrow (standing on the right), and Dan Croke, the branch secretary and standard-bearer (on the left), attended on behalf of the branch.

A solemn and formal occasion followed and the Yeovil branch standard was paraded at Westminster Abbey, probably for the first time ever.

Many dignitaries made a point of speaking to our representatives and expressed their pleasure and thanks for the

attendance of the Royal British Legion, Yeovil Branch, on that momentous occasion.



The November/December edition of the Royal Marine's Journal, The Globe & Laurel, featured a photograph of some of the Standard Bearers. Closest to the camera is Dan Cooke, who is also Secretary to the Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion.

ITEM 031

PITTARD'S POPPY COLLECTION

30th September 2019

THE "PITTARD'S POPPY" AND THE YEOVIL BRANCH, ROYAL BRITISH LEGION.

Every year Yeovil and its surrounding district abounds with some wonderful Remembrance Day commemorative displays, whether they be found in a school, business, or private household. The Royal British Legion, Yeovil, decided that it was time to recognise these presentations, but what would be suitable?

The Yeovil Branch Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, came up with the idea of having a perpetual trophy made so that the best Remembrance Day themed presentation could be suitably rewarded. He approached the local leather company of Pittard's P.L.C. and they were more than happy to donate a trophy that would be a significant reflection of Yeovil and the surrounding area. What better way to do so than to have a poppy trophy made of leather?



After consultation with Pittard's P.L.C., its chief designer, Alice Chambers, came up with a concept and made the trophy by hand. It consists of a display of red leather poppies mounted upon a wooden plinth.

The photograph shows the Vice-Chair of the Yeovil RBL accepting the "Pittards Poppy" trophy from Alice on the 30th September 2019. It is planned to award this annual prize to the best Remembrance Day themed decoration or display.

Judging for the event will take place during the week commencing Monday 4th November through to Friday 8th November 2019. Any business, school, or private individuals who fall within the Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion's areas of responsibility e.g. Brympton, Chilthorne Domer, Chilton Cantelo and Ashington, East Chinnock, Ilchester, Limington, Marston Magna, Mudford, Queen Camel, Rimpton, Sparkford, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Tintinhull, Yeovil, Yeovil Without and Yeovilton are eligible to enter this annual occurrence.

The winners will retain the trophy for 10 months and may display it accordingly. Entry is free and applications can be made through the branches Facebook page, which can be found at YEOVIL RBL.

ITEM 032

RBL YEOVIL COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 30th September 2019

A Committee Meeting was held in the Y.E.S.S. Club at 1930 hours on this day.

COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA
YEOVIL AND DISTRICT BRANCH
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
1930hrs – 30 Sep 19
YESS Club, Yeovil

1. Act of Remembrance by Chairman
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of Last Meeting
5. Matters Arising (If not, number and sign off)
6. Chairman's Report
7. Vice Chairman's Report :
1. Pittard's Poppy 2. VE Day 2020
8. President's Matters
9. Treasurer's Report
10. Secretary's Matters
11. Buffet for Remembrance Sunday – Vote required
Up to £250 as usual ?
12. Date for AGM – Branch Officer Election
13. Next Agenda items (AoB)
14. Kohima prayer

ITEM 033

VE DAY 75 MEETING

Monday 7th October 2019

The Vice Chair attended a meeting in the Yeovil Town House as part of the Yeovil VE Day Commemoration Steering Group at 1330 hours.

ITEM 034

THE PITTARDS POPPY

Thursday 10th October 2019



Vice-Chair of the Yeovil RSL, Peter Forrester, accepting the Pittards Poppy trophy from Alice Chambers

Creating a worthy recognition

THERE is a new trophy up to be awarded for the Remembrance Day commemorative displays, whether they be found in a school, business or private household.

The Royal British Legion, Yeovil, decided that it was time to recognise these presentations and Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, came up with the idea of having a perpetual trophy. He approached local leather

company of Pittard's P.L.C. and they were more than happy to donate a trophy that would be a significant reflection of Yeovil and the surrounding area.

Chief designer, Alice Chambers, made the trophy by hand - a display of red leather poppies mounted upon a wooden plinth. Judging for the event will take place from November 4-8.

ITEM 035

COUNTY NEWSLETTER FOR NOVEMBER 2019

Monday 4th November 2019.

YEOVIL BRANCH AND THE "PITTARD'S POPPY"

Every year Yeovil and its surrounding district abounds with some wonderful Remembrance Day commemorative displays, whether they be found in a school, business, or private household. The RBL Yeovil Branch decided that it was time to recognise these presentations, but what would be suitable? The Yeovil Branch Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, came up with the idea of having a perpetual trophy made so that the best Remembrance Day themed presentation could be suitably rewarded. He approached the local leather company of Pittard's P.L.C. and they were more than happy to donate a trophy that would be a significant reflection of Yeovil and the surrounding area. What better way to do so than to have a poppy trophy made of leather? After consultation with Pittard's P.L.C., its chief designer, Alice Chambers, came up with a concept and made the trophy by hand. It consists of a display of red leather poppies mounted upon a wooden plinth.



The photograph shows the Vice Chair of Yeovil Branch accepting the "Pittards Poppy" trophy from Alice on the 30th September 2019. It is planned to award this annual prize to the best Remembrance Day themed decoration or display. Judging for the event will take place during the week commencing Monday 4th November through to Friday 8th November 2019. Any business, school, or private individuals who fall within the Yeovil Branch Royal British Legion's areas of responsibility e.g. Brympton, Chilthorne Domer, Chilton Cantelo and Ashington, East Chinnock, Ilchester, Limington, Marston Magna, Mudford, Queen Camel, Rimpton, Sparkford, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Tintinhull,

Yeovil, Yeovil Without and Yeovilton are eligible to enter this annual event. The winners will retain the trophy for 10 months and may display it accordingly. Entry is free and applications can be made through the branch's Facebook page, which can be found at "Yeovil RBL".

Peter Forrester, Vice-Chair, Yeovil Branch

ITEM 036 – SOLDIER CUT-OUTS.

On Tuesday, 5th November 2019, cut-outs of a British soldier, supplied by the Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion, made an appearance around the town.

The first appeared by the traffic lights on Sherborne Road heading out on the A30 towards Sherborne. It features the soldier standing in front of the wire fence that surrounds the field next to the Pen Mill Hotel.

The soldier stands with a bowed head and with his arms reversed, signifying the burial of a lost comrade.

The second pair stands sentinel over a field of crosses, some of which bear the names of lost soldiers from Yeovil and District. Some names come from other places, but are still remembered here. This display is outside the Church of St. John in the centre of Yeovil, just across from the Borough war memorial.



ITEM 037 – PITTARDS POPPY CONTESTANTS.

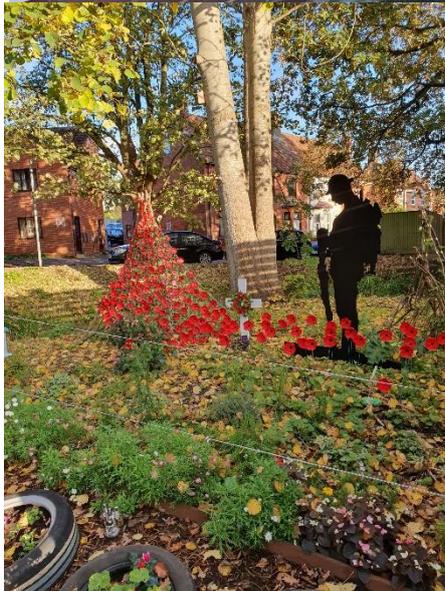
This is the first year proper of the competition, and uptake has been slow. People are beginning to find out about it and a flurry of activity across our region has produced some good displays.



PERFEKTIONS UNISEX HAIR SALON, YEOVIL.



**WEDDING SHOP,
PRINCES STREET.**



DODDINGTON BROOK



**RECKLEFORD
SCHOOL**

ITEM 038

BREEZE RADIO STATION

Saturday, 9th November 2019

The Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, recorded an item about Remembrance Day and what it meant to him for the Breeze Radio Station.

ITEM 039

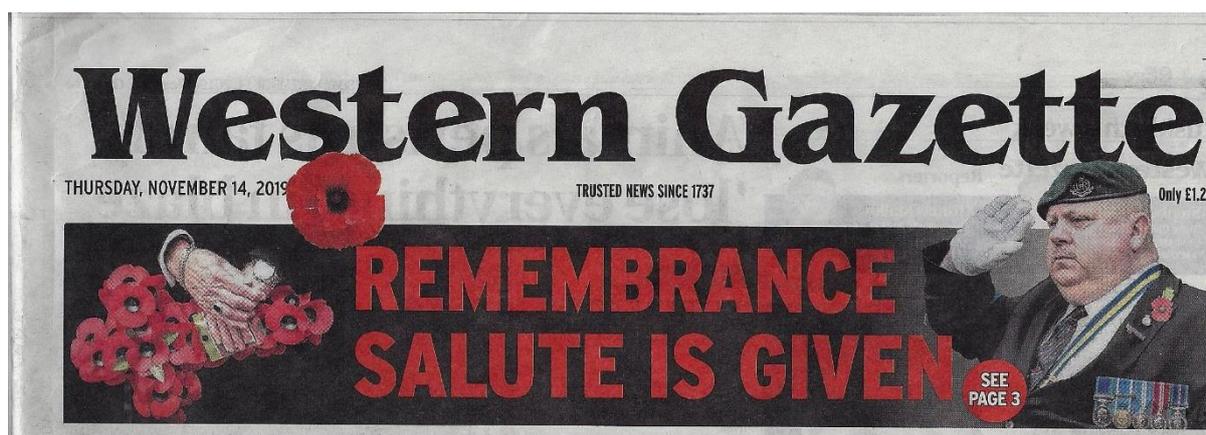
REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE

Sunday, 10th November 2019

The Branch paraded around the war memorial in the Borough, Yeovil, for the annual Remembrance Day service. The Chair, Simon Woodrow, acted as Parade Marshall for the event. The Branch President, Christopher Le Hardy, laid a wreath on behalf of the branch. The branch standard was not paraded due to the lack of a trained Standard Bearer.

The weather was kind to us that day, cold but dry. The event was well attended by members of the public. On completion of the parade the branch repaired to the Yeovil Ex-Services and Social Club on Preston Road, where a buffet was served to the attending service personnel and civilian guests of the branch. The Lord Mayor was in attendance.

At 2.30 p.m. the branch and the civic party went to the Preston Road Cemetery where, after a brief ceremony, wreaths were laid in the Soldiers' Plot.



Remembrance Day

Yeovil paid its respects on Remembrance Sunday with a parade and wreath laying ceremony in the town
PICTURES BY Len Copland



Children at the Ladybird Preschool in Bruton created a remembrance wreath to honour those that fought for them to have freedom today and in the future

MAJESTIC
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ITEM 040

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Monday, 11th November 2019

On Remembrance Day proper the Branch President, Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Member Craig Price stood at the war memorial in the Borough to lay a wreath. The event was attended by the robed Mayor of Yeovil together with other dignitaries. As the Leonard Civil Defence Siren started, the Last Post was played through the branch's newly bought PA system, followed 2 minutes later by the Reveille. The whole was very effective, with townsfolk standing still and quiet throughout the event, and the buses at the bus stop turning off their engines. Again the weather was kind to us, cold but bright.

ITEM 041

H.M.S. "HERON" VERSUS ARMY AIR CORPS FOOTBALL MATCH

Wednesday, 13th November 2019

The Vice-Chair attended a football match to raise funds for the Royal British Legion in the grounds of R.N.A.S. Yeovilton. Again the weather was kind, being cold but dry.

A fair match ensued, with the winners being the Army Air Corps team by 2 goals to 1. A newly created trophy manufactured in R.N.A.S. Yeovilton was unveiled and will be competed for on an annual basis. It is a brass football with 2 soldiers upon it surrounded by metal poppies.



ITEM 042
COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday 21st November 2019

1. Act of Remembrance by Chairman
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of Last Meeting
5. Matters Arising (If not, number and sign off)
6. Chairman's Report – R. Sunday
7. Vice Chairman's Report – VE Day, Pittards Poppy
8. President's Matters - Silhouettes
9. Treasurer's Report – Accounts ready to be adopted at AGM ?
10. Secretary's Matters – FAA Museum
11. AGM Matters
12. Next Agenda items / Date for Meeting (Jan)
13. Kohima Closing Prayer

ITEM 043

PITTARD'S POPPY AWARD FOR 2019

Friday 22nd November 2019

**THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION YEOVIL BRANCH PITTARD'S
POPPY AWARD FOR THE BEST REMEMBRANCE DAY
DISPLAY FOR 2019 IS AWARDED TO:**

The Brookie Bridge Community Project

The following shops and schools are

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Able2Achieve, Yeovil

Eleanor Florence Bridal Shop, Yeovil

Just Maria, Ilchester

Reckleford School and Nursery, Yeovil

St. Margaret's Hospice Shop, Hendiford, Yeovil

St. Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Tintinhull

ITEM 044

PITTARD'S POPPY AWARD FOR 2019

Friday 29th November 2019

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION YEOVIL BRANCH PITTARD'S POPPY AWARD FOR THE BEST REMEMBRANCE DAY DISPLAY FOR 2019 WAS AWARDED TO:

The Brookie-Bridge Community Project.



The picture shows Peter Forrester, the Vice-Chair of the Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion, presenting the Pittards Poppy for the best Remembrance Day Display for 2019 to John Gilbert, representing the Brookie-Bridge Community Project. Nicola Gilbert holds the certificate, and Ellen Russell, also members of the Project, attended. The community raised £90 for the Poppy Appeal as a result of their efforts.

ITEM 045

THE RNAS YEOVILTON BAKE SALE

Monday 9th December 2019

The Vice-Chair of the Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion, attended a “Bake Sale” held in the Air Traffic Control Centre Building in R.N.A.S. Yeovilton. The men and women of the air station had taken time out to make cakes and offered them, together with tea or coffee, for sale to raise funds for the Branch. Not to be outdone in the cooking stakes, the Vice-Chair took along a trench cake that had been baked and donated by Mr. Bill Slater, a staunch member of the G.W.R.S.A. Club in Yeovil.

During the days of both World Wars eggs were in extremely short supply and were rarely available for use in cake making. A recipe was developed by the War Office for a fruit cake, which would keep but always be a bit crumbly because there were no eggs used to bind the ingredients together. These rich fruit cakes were made by the loved ones at home and shipped out to the troops on the ground and in the trenches. They soon became very popular with the men and, of course, were quickly named by the British Tommies as “Trench Cakes”.

A fantastic sum of **£120.56p** was finally raised and gratefully accepted by the Vice-Chair. The whole event was successfully organised by L.A.C.’s Matthew King and Natasha Seager.

**During the VE Day Celebrations to be held in Yeovil on Friday, 8th May 2020, it is planned to hold a competition to find the maker of the best “Trench Cake”. The recipe to be used will be published next year.*

ITEM 046

ITEM IN FREE YEOVIL PRESS NEWSPAPER

17th December 2019

Poignant display for Remembrance

THE Brookie Bridge Community Gardening Project is organised by the residents of the Seaton Road area in Yeovil.

The aim of the project is to transform, improve and enhance the area around Brookie Bridge at Dodham Brook in West Street, off Huish, for the enjoyment of people who use the footpaths and, in doing so, create a haven for wildlife.

Organisers are looking to populate the area with plants and flowers that are

native or beneficial to insects and birds. The project's Remembrance display was beautifully poignant and a worthy winner of the Pittards Poppy Award.

The area was well-known as having eight adjoining Air Raid shelters built during the Second World War which could have accommodated just under 100 people. They remained there at the Brookie for many years after the war, but have since been removed.



INSET: The poignant Remembrance display at the Brookie Bridge Community Gardening Project in Yeovil. Photo: Courtesy of Facebook. MAIN IMAGE: The Brookie was home to eight Air Raid shelters during the Second World War. Photo courtesy of the A-Z of Yeovil's History at www.yeovilhistory.co.uk.

The Pittards Poppy and the Royal British Legion

EVERY year Yeovil and the surrounding district abounds with some wonderful Remembrance Day commemorative displays whether they be found in a school, business or private household.

The Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion decided that it was time to recognise these presentations, but what would be suitable?

The branch vice-chairman, Peter Forrester, came up with the idea of having a perpetual trophy made so that the best Remembrance Day themed presentation could be suitably rewarded.

He approached the local leather company of Pittards and it was more than happy to donate a trophy that would be a significant reflection of Yeovil and the surrounding area. What better way to do so than to have a poppy trophy made of leather?

After consultation with Pittards' chief designer, Alice Chambers, came up with a concept and made the trophy by hand. It consists of a display of red leather poppies mounted upon a wooden plinth.

Judging for the event took place between November 4-8.

Any business, school or private



individuals who fall within the branch area of Brympton, Chilthorne Damer, Chilton Cantelo and Ashington, East Chinnock, Ilchester, Limington, Marston Magna, Mudford, Queen Camel, Rimpleton, Sparkford, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Tintinhull, Yeovil, Yeovil Without and Yeovilton were eligible to enter what will become an annual event.

PHOTO: Vice-chairman of the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion, Peter Forrester, with the Pittards Poppy trophy and chief designer Alice Chambers.



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Brookie Bridge wins the award



THE first-ever Pittards Poppy Award – organised by the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion – has been awarded to the Brookie Bridge Community Project in Yeovil.

The following shops and schools received highly commended certificates from the Royal British Legion – Able2Achieve, Yeovil; Eleanor Florence Bridal Shop, Yeovil; Just Maria, Ilchester; Reckleford School and Nursery, Yeovil; St Margaret's Hospice Shop, Hendford,

Yeovil; and St Margaret's Primary School, Tintinhull.

The community project raised £90 for the annual Poppy Appeal.

PHOTO: Vice-chairman of the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion, Peter Forrester (second left), is pictured presenting the trophy to John Gilbert, of the Brookie Bridge Community, along with Nicola Gilbert (holding the certificate) and Ellen Russell.

2020

ITEM 047

FUNERAL OF FORMER TINTINHULL & CHILTHORNE DOMER BRANCH CHAIRMAN

Monday 3rd January 2020

The year began on a sad note. The Branch Chair and Vice-Chair attended the Parish Church in Tintinhull to represent the Yeovil Branch at the funeral of the former Chair of Tintinhull & Chilthorne Domer Branch and County Vice President, Frank Taylor.

In a packed Church in Chilthorne Domer, the County Chairman, Mr Robert McDonald, was also in attendance. The County and Tintinhull & Chilthorne Domer branch standards accompanied the coffin into the Church and at the graveside.

ITEM 048

COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA (13)

Wednesday 22nd January 2020

1. Act of Remembrance by Chairman
2. Chairman's Opening Remarks
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of Last Meeting
5. Matters Arising (If not, number and sign off)
6. Chairman's Report – County Conference
7. Vice Chairman's Report – VE Day.
8. President's Matters – None to Report
9. Treasurer's Report.
10. Secretary's Matters – FAA Museum (Elliot)
11. AGM Matters – None Reported
12. Next Agenda items / Date for Meeting (Mar)
13. Kohima Closing Prayer

ITEM 049

FUNERAL OF MR BARRY PRICE

Friday 6th March 2020

The funeral of Mr Barry Price, father of the Yeovil Branch Standard Bearer, Barry Price, took place in the Yeovil Crematorium at 1120 a.m. on this day. The Branch Standard plus one other standard was paraded. The Yeovil Branch was represented by our Chairman, Simon Woodrow.

ITEM 050

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE RE YEOVIL VE DAY 75

Wednesday 11th March 2020

Extract from the Yeovil Press, Edition 18:





ITEM 051

DONATION OF SLEEPING MATS

MONDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY 2020

Most cities and towns have their fair share of the homeless, sadly several coming from the ex-service community and dossing down in Yeovil. February 2020 was a comparatively wet and cold month, and our friends from:

*Needles & Pins UK Ltd
2 -3 Wessex Buildings
Somerton Business Park
Somerset
TA11 6SB*

made some sleeping mats for the Somerset homeless. 6 of these were donated to the Yeovil Branch of the Royal British Legion for distribution. The Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, went along to collect them from the director, Carole Champion, and seamstress Agnieszka Chwidez. Peter made sure that the mats got to the right people.

ITEM 052

VIRTUAL V.E. DAY

FRIDAY 24TH APRIL 2020

The Somerset RBL County Bulletin dated 24 April 2020 No: 5, contained a reference to the Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion, Virtual V.E. Day, devised and organised by the Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester. Fuller details follow of the event which will take place on Friday 8th May 2020.

ITEM 053

ANZAC DAY

SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2020

The Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion, has an active Facebook page at YEOVIL RBL. The following item commemorating that day appeared:



ANZAC men,

Australian and New Zealand may seem a long way away, but a total of **42** soldiers from Somerset, **13** with the Australian Forces and **29** with the New Zealand Forces, sacrificed their lives in World War One.

ANZAC DAY

25TH APRIL 2020

What is probably the most important national occasion for both Australia and New Zealand is Anzac Day (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). It marks the anniversary of the first campaign that started on the morning of 25th April 1915.

The Anzacs set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles up to the allied navies. Their objective was to capture the Turkish city of Constantinople (now Istanbul). It was then the centre of the Ottoman Empire and an ally of Germany. This landing led to major casualties for both the Australian and New Zealand forces during World War One.

ANZAC Day commemorates this landing and it also honours those men and woman from these two Commonwealth countries who have sacrificed their lives since.

The Yeovil Branch, Royal British Legion asks you to remember those

VE DAY ARTICLE YEOVIL PRESS

SATURDAY 2ND MAY 2020



Hang out the flags to commemorate VE Day 75

PEOPLE are being encouraged to hold their own parties at home to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe.

The planned VE Day event scheduled to take place on Friday, May 8, at the Yeovil Recreation Centre has had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus outbreak.

But in traditional British bulldog spirit, we are not going to let that stand in the way of this country commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of hostilities with Nazi Germany.

The Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion is organising a Virtual VE Celebration on May 8 and is inviting all households and operating businesses in Yeovil and the surrounding areas to take part in the day.

Here's how you can get involved:
Please decorate your house, flat or business in red, white, and blue. And, if possible, fly a national flag such as the Union Jack.

If you do not have a flag, how about cutting a white plastic bag so you can draw a flag on the inside and attach it to

plastic into triangles joined by a piece of string or twine – great decorations for the children to make! The combinations and ideas are endless.

Get the children to draw a flag, regimental cap badge, or anything to do with the Second World War, so that they can display it in the windows of your home.

Take a picture of how you celebrated and send it to the YEOVIL RBL Facebook page where a selection will be published.

Also send your VE Day celebration photos to the Yeovil Press for publication in the June edition of the paper – email us at yeovilpress@gmail.com .

At 2.55pm any buglers, trumpeters or cornet players are invited to either stand in their gardens or on their front door steps and play "The Last Post."

At 3 pm the "All Clear" siren will sound from the Leonardo's helicopter factory in Yeovil during which time all citizens of Yeovil are invited to raise a toast - any sort of beverage - to the men, women, and children who were involved in the Second World War.

It was at 3pm on May 8, 1945, when the

announced that the War in Europe was officially over.

On completion of the siren playing, local Yeovil piper Roy Groves will play an especially written tune, The Battle's O'er on the bagpipes - pre-recorded as per the Covid-19 rules. This will be broadcast on Radio Ninesprings.

Although street parties are not allowed because of the Covid-19 rules, why not go out into your garden, if you have one, or on your doorstep, and after the piper has finished playing his lament, bang a pot or pan to show your support.

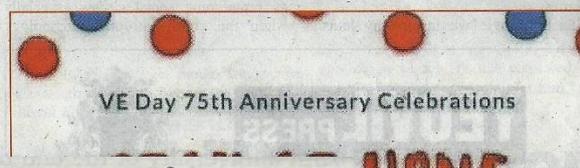
At 6.55pm our local Yeovil town crier, Bruce Trigger, will make the Cry for Peace and once again this will be broadcast on local radio.

A spokesman for the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion said: "We are



promoting a wartime "Spam Fritter" event, where we will invite all of Yeovil and the surrounding area to have a traditional meal of "Spam" on VE Day and at home."

A traditional war-time "Spam Fritter" recipe can be found on Page 16.



Yummy! Spam fritters for VE Day anniversary

WITH the current Covid-19 crisis in force, many of us will be experiencing what our forbearers went through at this time, except for rationing.

Fresh meat was hard to come by and strictly rationed. To help the United Kingdom survive, the United States of America used to ship tons and tons of canned meat to our country.

The first shipment reached Britain after a perilous voyage in 1941, thereby giving the British a different tinned meat from the staple of corned beef.

This meat was called Spam (Shoulder of Pork and Ham) but went by several other acronyms, depending on who you were. Something Posing As Meat, Stuff Pork and Ham and Spare Parts Animal Meat were but just a few of the more popular names.

This tinned meat formed a basic part of the British diet back then and the British housewife was hard put to come up with original recipes for the time – but they did!

Try this basic wartime menu, and please do not add an egg as this particular commodity was extremely scarce at that time. An adult was rationed to one egg per week, plus egg

powder.

What you will need:

1 x 200g can of Spam (available from most shops).

150g x plain flour.

200ml x cold water.

2 tablespoons of oil for frying or you could deep fry if you prefer.

1: Carefully open the tin of Spam and cut into six equal slices.

2: Put the flour into a mixing bowl and gradually add the cold water and whisk until the mixture is fully blended and smooth. It should form a nice thick coating of batter.

3: Heat the oil in a large frying pan.

4: Dip each slice of Spam Chopped Pork and Ham into the batter, shake off excess, and place in the hot oil.

5: Do not be afraid to pour a bit more batter over the Spam slices as they are cooking, especially where there are any marks from thumbprints etc.

6: When golden brown, drain on a piece of paper (use absorbent kitchen paper but remember that your ancestors did not have that luxury in the Second World War!).

ITEM 055

VE DAY RADIO INTERVIEWS

MONDAY 4TH MAY 2020

The Yeovil Branch Vice-Chair was interviewed on Radio Ninesprings, Yeovil's own radio station, regarding the VE Day celebrations in Yeovil. This long interview was repeated twice, and also appeared on the Yeovil Real News Facebook page.

The station broadcast "The Battle's O'er" played on the bagpipes by local man Roy Groves. The "Cry for Peace" by the Town Crier, and a committee member of the Yeovil Branch, RBL, was also broadcast.

ITEM 056

COVID SUPPORT

All during Covid-19 Outbreak.

The Yeovil Branch RBL has been extremely active during the period. The Branch Chair, Simon Woodrow, personally telephoned each member to check on their well-being, and as a result responded with a few home visits to rectify the personal situations.

ITEM 057

VE DAY 75

8th May 2020

The Yeovil Branch RBL, in conjunction with Radio Ninesprings, Yeovil's own radio station, played an active part throughout the day in the VE Day 75 celebrations.

A poppy wreath was placed on the Yeovil Town War Memorial on behalf of the Royal British Legion. This was not a public event and the wreath was discreetly laid so that it was in position for the 11 a.m. period of the 2 minutes silence. Radio Ninesprings supported the event by not broadcasting for that whole period.

At 3 p.m., the Yeovil Branch had arranged with Leonardo's, the aircraft factory on the edge of Yeovil, to sound the "All Clear" on the Civil Defence Siren. This was followed by the pre-recorded sound of local piper Roy Groves playing the especially written bagpipe tune, "The Battle's O'er". Again, this tune was broadcast by Radio Ninesprings.

Throughout Yeovil the town was ablaze with individual bunting and flags displayed. Street parties, held in accordance with the Covid rules, were plentiful. On a beautifully warm summer's day probably more parties than could have been reasonably expected, due to the lockdown, took place.

One of the main street party fares on offer was Spam Fritters, the recipe having been previously published on the Facebook page of the YEOVIL RBL.

The Facebook page of the YEOVIL RBL also had a list of questions for the children to answer about World War Two, in particular one question that caught the children's imagination was that of "how many sweets were allowed" in their rations. The answers to the quiz were published on the Facebook page on the evening of VE Day.

Finally, at 6.55 p.m., Radio Ninesprings broadcast the previously recorded the "Cry for Peace", delivered by the Yeovil Town Crier and Branch Committee Member, Bruce Trigger. The day was ended by people gathered around their television sets to watch Her Majesty the Queen deliver her speech at the same time as her father gave it 75 years ago.

HISTORIC NOTE: Sadly, because of the COVID 19 epidemic that was raging at the time, the whole event had to be cancelled at very short notice.

ITEM 058

VJ DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE

15th AUGUST 2020

On Saturday, 15th August 2020, the Royal British Legion, Yeovil Branch, carried out an unadvertised (because of Covid) act of remembrance at 11 a.m. in front of the Yeovil town war memorial in the Borough to remember the 75th anniversary of V.J. (Victory in Japan) Day. The Branch Standard, carried by Dan Croke, was paraded.

Observing the correct social distancing measures and just before 11 a.m., the remembrance exhortation was read and the Last Post was sounded, followed by the 2 minutes silence. As the clock struck 11 and just after the very last strike of the bell, the Reveille was played. The Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, then read the Kohima exhortation.

Poppy wreaths were laid by the robed Mayor of Yeovil, David Recardo; Simon Woodrow, the Yeovil Branch Chairman; and Colonel Christopher Le Hardy, the Yeovil Branch President.



A wreath laying by Yeovil Mayor David Recardo to commemorate VJ Day 75 took place in Yeovil on Saturday morning. The event, to mark the end of the war against Japan in 1945, was organised by the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion and due to Covid-19 restrictions they didn't want to advertise the event to prevent crowds. Leading the wreath laying was Simon Woodrow, chairman of Yeovil RBL. Yeovil Town Crier Bruce Trigger, pictured right, gave a special VJ Day cry.

PICTURES BY Len Copland



The Town Crier, Bruce Trigger, in his full regalia, gave a strong version of the specially written Cry for VJ Day.

The Yeovil Branch of the R.B.L. apologise for not making this event open to the community, but we are sure the people of Yeovil will understand the necessity at this time for not making it so. The “Forgotten Army” were not forgotten on this momentous day by the people of Yeovil.

Extract from the Western Gazette dated Thursday 20th August 2020, page 3.

ITEM 059

COMMEMORATIVE EVENT 2021

21st AUGUST 2020

Council looks at holding commemorative event next year

COUNCILLORS are still looking at the possibility of holding an event to commemorate the 75th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day.

Yeovil Town Council had to shelve its big plans – in conjunction with the Royal British Legion – to hold a major all-day event at the Yeovil Recreation Ground on May 8 because of the restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

But councillors are still keen to think that – at some point when it is safe to do so – that a community event could be put on.

The situation was discussed on July 14 by members of the town council's promotions and activities committee who met via the Zoom conferencing technology.

The Mayor, Cllr David Recardo, said: "I don't think it would be practical to put on an event this year, but perhaps we could do something next year?"

Cllr Wes Read, who chaired the

meeting, added: "Perhaps we should do something on the anniversary next year? I think it would be odd doing it on any other day.

"But everything is up in the air at the moment because of the covid situation."

Town clerk, Amanda Card, said organising an event next year as a belated VE Day and VJ Day anniversary commemoration would not mean having to start from scratch.

"We do have a very good blueprint in place for such an event because we were so close to delivering it this year before we had to cancel," she said.

Miss Card said that money had been put aside in the council's budget for the VE Day commemoration and it would be good to use it for that purpose.

The Mayor suggested that a Music in the Park style event could perhaps be held.

Further discussions will take place in September.

Extract from
the Yeovil
Press,
Edition
Number 23,
August
2020.

For more news check out www.yeovilpress.co.uk

Note by P.F. Germany had formally surrendered on the 11th November 1918, and all nations had agreed to stop fighting while the terms of peace were negotiated. On the 28th June 1919, Germany and the Allied Nations (including Britain, France, Italy and Russia) signed the Treaty of Versailles, formally ending the war. Versailles Day.

ITEM O60
SOMERSET COUNTY NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2020

September 2020

VJ Day Commemorations at Yeovil ...

On Saturday, 15th August 2020, RBL Yeovil Branch carried out an unadvertised (because of Covid) act of remembrance at 11 a.m. in front of the Yeovil Town War Memorial to remember the 75th anniversary of VJ-Day.

The Branch Standard, carried by Dan Croke, was paraded. Just before 11am the remembrance exhortation was read and the Last Post was sounded, followed by the two minutes silence. As the clock struck 11 the Reveille was played. The Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester read the Kohima exhortation and poppy wreaths were laid by the Mayor of Yeovil, David Recardo, Simon Woodrow, Yeovil Branch Chairman, and Colonel Christopher Le Hardy, Yeovil Branch President. The Town Crier, Bruce Trigger, gave a strong version of the specially written "Cry for VJ Day".



RBL Yeovil Branch apologises for not making this event open to the community, but we are sure the people of Yeovil will understand the necessity at this time for not making it so. The people of Yeovil did not forget the "Forgotten Army" on this momentous day.

May I draw attention to one of the greatest assets to our branch? It is the P.A. system that we purchased from the internet last year for the princely sum of £169 from Branch funds. It has proved invaluable to us. The Last Post, with the exact 2 minutes silence, and ending in Reveille, is on a USB stick ready to just pop into the PA system and play. Gone now is the sometimes almost impossible task of finding a bugler at short notice – nothing can replace the real one, of course – but having this asset has benefitted our branch time and time again. It is part of our stated role to ensure that anytime an ex-service person is buried or cremated within Yeovil, and at the next of kin's bequest, we have the fitting final send off recorded and ready to go. The picture shows the Vice-Chair with the piece of equipment concerned. Behind him stands a quizzical branch chair, Simon Woodrow. He is seen here still trying to work out the bill!

Pete Forrester, Vice-Chair, Yeovil Branch

ITEM 061

YEOVIL PRESS EDITION NO 25

OCTOBER 2020.

British Legion urges people to stay away from War Memorial

THE Yeovil and District Branch of the Royal British Legion has confirmed with deep regret that due to the ongoing health pandemic and associated Covid-19 restrictions there will be no formally organised Remembrance Sunday event on November 8.

The branch announced on October 7 that there would be no parade through the town or service held at the War Memorial in the Borough.

Vice-chairman of the Yeovil branch, Peter Forrester, said: "Individuals remain at liberty to attend the area and lay a wreath of their own free will if they so wish.

"But there will be no march past of personnel and veterans taking place after any church service, nor will there be any

military band or standards on parade.

"Please do not gather or congregate in the area as there will be nothing to see, just health risks to take!"

Yeovil Town Council has decided to release a short Remembrance video montage in place of its usual involvement that morning (see separate story on Page 17).

Mr Forrester added: "The Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion encourage the general public, in the absence of any formal parade, to create a drawing or picture of a poppy and place it in their window prior to Remembrance Sunday as a show of support and respect for the fallen and wounded of all conflicts, from all nations."

Entries needed for the Pittards Poppy Trophy

ENTRIES are wanted for the annual Pittards Poppy Trophy which is held year to find the best Poppy Day display in and around the Yeovil area.

The competition is organised by the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion and the display can take any form and is left entirely to the discretion of those making the display. The trophy - sponsored by Yeovil firm Pittards - is retained for 11 months by the winners.

Judging for the event will take place during the week commencing Monday, November 2, through to Friday, November 6.

Any business, school or private individuals who fall within the Yeovil

branch of the Royal British Legion's area of responsibility can take part. The branch area covers Brympton, Chilthorne Damer, Chilton Cantelo and Ashington, East Chinnock, Ilchester, Limington, Marston Magna, Mudford, Queen Camel, Rington, Sparidford, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Tintinhull, Yeovil, Yeovil Without and Yeovilton and everyone is eligible and welcome to enter this annual event.

If you would like to enter this free competition, then please either contact the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion on its Facebook page [Yeovil RBL] or by email direct to Peter Forrester at peterf707@aol.com.

ITEM O62

SOMERSET SOUND RADIO INTERVIEW

Wednesday 14th October 2020

The vice-chair of Yeovil RBL gave a talk on Somerset Sound at about 0715 hours, repeated throughout the day at two hourly intervals, regarding the Pittards Poppy competition and how to enter.

ITEM O63

LEGION MAGAZINE

Wednesday 4th November 2020

NEWS



Michael Welch, Chairman, Blakeney Cley & District Branch, at the local war memorial

IN THE BUBBLE

Next December, a team of four men called The Bubbleheads will take on the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge: crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a 25-foot rowing boat, covering 3,000 miles, to raise money for The Royal British Legion.

Andy Taw was a Royal Navy Clearance Diver for eight years, and his colleagues Lewis Locke and James Piper also served. "On the boat, just like in the Forces, you want to operate as a well-oiled machine and be prepared for anything that comes your way," says Andy. The team chose to fundraise for the Legion because of the help it provides to the Armed Forces community.

Alongside the Legion, The Bubbleheads are raising money for Wessex Cancer Trust, which supported James and his wife Nikki after she was diagnosed with an extremely rare type of cancer six years ago. She sadly passed away earlier this year. "We know that times are tough and people don't have a lot of money," says Andy, as the team continue their training on land. "But we really want to raise the money for our charities – and get across the Atlantic as quickly as possible."

Visit www.thebubbleheads.co.uk to find out more about the challenge and the team's training.



HOW LEGION BRANCHES COMMEMORATED VJ DAY

The 75th anniversary of VJ Day on 15 August was an unusual one given social-distancing requirements. But branches still remembered – some in quiet contemplation and others in creative ways. Here are a few:

Yeovil Branch

A socially distanced group gathered in front of Yeovil War Memorial. The Exhortation was read and the Last Post sounded, followed by the Two Minute Silence. As the clock struck 11 the Reveille was played, before Vice Chair Peter Forrester read the Kohima Epitaph.

A recently purchased PA system has proved invaluable to the branch. "Whenever we need to have the Last Post and the Reveille sounded, all we do is pop a USB stick into the PA system and play it," says Peter. "Gone now is the impossible task of finding a bugler at short notice – though nothing can replace a real one, of course. The 'Forgotten Army' were not forgotten on this momentous day by the people of Yeovil."

Shirley Branch

At Shirley Park Memorial, a restricted private event was led by Reverend Paul Day, while wreaths were laid by President Ernie Riley, Vice Chairman of the Far East Prisoners of War Kenneth Coy, and Chairman of the RAF Association Joe Mullen. Branch Chairman Ken Russell said: "We owe a great debt to the men and women past and present serving in our Armed Forces. For me, it is a privilege and honour to have been part of the service."

Blakeney Cley & District Branch

During the pandemic, the branch has been working on reaching its members and the wider community online. Its VJ Day event – attended by committee members at the war memorial while the vicar said prayers from his home – was all live streamed to the community. The branch continues to put its technology skills to good use, supporting clubs and arranging concerts and talks.

10 LIVE ON

ITEM 064

YEOVIL PRESS REMEMBRANCE DAY PULLOUT

11TH NOVEMBER 2020

The Covid 19 Remembrance Day ceremony held on Wednesday 11th October 2020 was still marked by Yeovil. A special 12 page Remembrance Special pull-out was produced by the local newspaper, the Yeovil Express. Extracted from it are the parts which uniquely feature the Yeovil Branch RBL. The first part shows our Chair, Simon Woodrow, laying the wreath on our behalf.



The second part shows our Vice-Chair, Peter Forrester, leading the Remembrance Day ceremony in the Soldier's Plot, Yeovil Cemetery. This event took place 20 minutes after the main ceremony at the Yeovil war memorial, thus allowing the Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Dave Recardo, time to attend.



The third part reported on how, instead of having the usual Remembrance Day Parade, Yeovil Town Council funded and released a video on You Tube of a pre-recorded virtual remembrance day, entitled Yeovil Remembrance Day Video. This can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve-8PwHZjho>

LEST WE FORGET - WE WILL REMEMBER THEM
A 12-PAGE REMEMBRANCE SPECIAL

Film of respect, reflection and remembrance

A SPECIAL Remembrance Day film made on behalf of Yeovil Town Council has been watched hundreds of times by viewers.

The council decided against holding its own traditional Act of Remembrance because of Covid-19 and the subsequent restrictions about mass gatherings.

There was a fear that had the council announced it was holding a ceremony at the War Memorial in The Borough then hundreds of people would have attended.

But not wishing to disrespect the names of all those who are etched onto the memorial a decision was taken to create a "virtual" Remembrance Day film – which would be screened to coincide with 11am two-minute silence – for people to watch within the safety of their own homes.

The film was shared on Yeovil Town Council's website, social media Facebook channel and YouTube and can be viewed on this link www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1qhgU_Q5A or go online to YouTube and search for Yeovil Town Council Video of Remembrance.

The film starts with mace bearer Bruce Trigger hoisting the Union flag at the Town House and is followed by the Mayor of Yeovil, Cllr David Recardo, paying tribute to The Fallen.

Peter Forester, of the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion, reads the traditional Exhortation and Kohima passages stood by the War Memorial.

Bugler Bob Spiller, of the HMS Heron Volunteer Band, plays the Last Post and Reveille while Rev James Dudley-Smith, of St John's Church, and Rev Jim Pearce, the Mayor's Chaplain, gave addresses from within the church.

The film also contained footage of the War Memorial at Preston Plucknett on Preston Road, Yeovil, and of the War Graves contained within Yeovil Cemetery. Filming for the production took place a week before Remembrance Day on November 1.

People have spoken on social media of their appreciation for the film and have thanked Yeovil Town Council.

Grateful thanks go to the Rich Digital for the video production along with the Yeovil Press, freelance photographer Len Copland and Bob Osborn, of the A-to-Z of Yeovil's History website, for the photographs used in the video.

Special thanks go to Yeovil Town Council's town clerk Amanda Card and the council's buildings and civic matters committee chairman, Cllr Rob Stickland, along with everyone who took part in the production.



Peter Forester, of the Royal British Legion, being filmed in The Borough. Photo: Steve Sowden.

The fourth part featured the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday, where a small ceremony took place at the war memorial. The Branch Chair, Simon Woodrow, represented the Yeovil Branch.



People gather – socially distancing – at the Yeovil War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday (November 8, 2020) to show their respects. Photo: Christine Jones.

Flowers were placed in the churchyard of St John's Church, Yeovil, at the plaque and tribune to those who were killed during the Falklands War of 1982. Photo: Christine Jones.

The dedication of the Yeovil War Memorial in The Borough in 1921 – 99 years ago. Photo courtesy of the A to Z of Yeovil's History website.

The war memorial at Preston Plucknett – taken on Remembrance Sunday 2020 – which is nestled back from the roadside of the busy Preston Road in Yeovil. Photo courtesy of the Brympton Matters page on social media Facebook.

A simple but effective tribute outside St John's Church in Yeovil created by members of the Royal British Legion. Photo: Christine Jones.

ITEM 065

PITTARDS POPPY AWARD 2020

5TH DECEMBER 2020

The Yeovil Press for December 2020, page 49, carried a report on the Pittards Poppy Award for 2020 to the Pen Mill Hotel, Yeovil.

Pen Mill Hotel wins annual Pittards Trophy for Remembrance



Pen Mill Hotel landlord Jon Palmer with the Pittards Trophy and winning certificate.



Peter Forrester – Pittards Trophy competition organiser and vice-chairman of the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion.

THE Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion runs an annual competition for the best Poppy Day themed display to commemorate Remembrance.

The displays can be anything that is Poppy Day related, and, as one would expect, a lot of the displays centred around poppy themes and poems about Remembrance Day.

The competition once again had some excellent entries, but the judges decided that this year's Pittards Trophy should go to the Pen Hill Hotel and Restaurant on Sherborne Road, Yeovil.

Competition organiser Peter Forrester, who is also vice-chairman of the Yeovil branch of the Royal British Legion, presented Pen Mill landlord Jon Palmer with the trophy and winner's certificate.

The poppies on the trophy are made of red leather and was made and donated by Yeovil-based Pittards.

Mr Forrester said: "It is competed for on an annual basis, with the winner retaining the perpetual trophy for ten months before the competition is held again.

"In addition to a perpetual lamp set amongst a traditional poppy display, together with a tray of poppies and a

donation box inside the hotel, the Pen Mill Hotel featured wooden cut-outs of soldiers affixed to the hotel's outside railings, right alongside the main A30 trunk road that passes by the hotel.

"Community involvement was assured when the hotel downloaded the Royal British Legion drawing poppy from the website. These black and white print-offs were given to the children of customers attending the hotel to colour in and the hotel picked the best child's effort and awarded the family a free lunch.

"The staff of the hotel throughout the two-week period always wore a poppy as part of their uniform to honour those lost during this remembrance period. It was a really good approach to a Remembrance Day display."

Mr Palmer, of the Pen Mill Hotel, said: "It was a pleasure to be included in this amazing cause. Thank you to all of our customers who showed their support."

The Pittards Trophy competition was keenly contested and highly commended certificates were awarded to St Margaret's School at Tintinhull, the Cambian Lufton Manor College at Lufton on the outskirts of Yeovil, and the Countess Gytha Primary School at Queen Camel.



Some of the poppy drawings coloured in by younger visitors to the Pen Mill Hotel before Lockdown Two.



A very poignant display as the Pen Mill Hotel showed its support to the annual Poppy Appeal.

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