

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (KILMINGTON BRANCH) AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2016

As the nights close in and the evenings invite us to sit beside a warming fire, I thought it prudent to bring you all up to date with what has been happening with our branch. I thought I would start this edition with a couple of National and County notices. First and foremost; The RBL Women's Section - Following positive and constructive discussions, the joint Working Group of representatives of the Women's Section and of the Board of Trustees of The Royal British Legion submitted a plan for the modernisation of the women's section and as a result they are delighted to announce that the plan, having been agreed by the Central Committee of the Women's Section, has been approved by the Board – (A result for common sense, whatever next!!) It's just a pity it came too late for many women's sections who took the decision to dissolve. I would also like to announce that we have a new County President; the Hon Sarah Lopes, who is the granddaughter of 1st Earl Haig, so we are honoured to have someone so close to the origin of the Legion.

Now to events closer to home; on the 17th September we held our WW1 Commemoration Evening and I would like to thank everyone for such a splendid evening. The new format of having a brief talk before dinner and then another half way through worked extremely well and was enjoyed by many. A huge thank you to both of our speakers David and Angus but also Claire for such a lovely spread, John



and Jenny for both running the bar and providing such a splendid floral display and of course Lesley for her overall coordination (I would also like to thank Peter Ball for his outstanding support). The revised total for the evening, after expenses, was a magnificent £758.29. On the 7th October over 70 personnel turned out for



the RBL's Annual Lecture which this year was given by Maj David Sharpe BEM Rtd. In just over an hour David provided an incredible recollection of his career including his time as a POW during the Korea War. At 88 years of age his memory was exceptional; his fortitude, endurance and sheer ability to survive the ordeal of the North Korean prison camps was a fantastic feat of human endurance. Nearly £200 was raised in the Admiral's Jug which was split between David's Charity for surviving POW's and the Poppy Appeal. It is with great sadness that I have to report that David passed away on 13th November, although very sad, how fitting it should be 'Remembrance Sunday'.

On Monday, 17th October Brian and Caroline Lavender hosted the poppy collectors for the last time and, on completion of this year's event, will hand over to Peter and Louise Wood. Their outstanding contribution will be recognised at the Autumn Coffee Morning. A small number of members attended the Devon County Festival of Remembrance on the 10th November in Exeter Cathedral and reported a highly successful evening, hopefully this will encourage more to attend next year! And so to our own acts of Remembrance; on a glorious Friday, 11th November over 50 members attended the cricket pavilion to observe the two minute silence signalled by the launching of maroons (*clearly timing was of the essence*).



This year's Remembrance Sunday Service was conducted at St Giles Church by the Rev Simon Holloway and the RBL Padre, Darrell Homes. Close to 150 people attended the service and afterwards joined many others at the War Memorial for the second part of the ceremony, (*it was particularly pleasing to have two serving members of the armed forces; Lance Corporal Alex Hill, Royal Engineers and Marine Ryan Hewkin, Royal Marines, as well as the Scouts and an increased number of*



younger people) thereafter many returned to the Village Hall for tea and coffee before boarding a coach to Haselbury Mill, where nearly 70 enjoyed an excellent meal and very jovial atmosphere. My thanks to all those who helped organise a fantastic day of Remembrance and especially Ann Marsh and helpers at the Village Hall for providing tea and coffee (*more to come on how much we raised during the 'Poppy Appeal'*). In the evening a record number of people attended the Quiz night in the New Inn, Kilmington which raised an incredible £377 for the poppy appeal; our thanks to Clive Garner for organising the evening.

What's on next? On Saturday, 26th November we have our annual Autumn Coffee Morning at Kilmington Village Hall and after the success of last year we will continue our Christmas Theme; so please join us for coffee, tea or mulled wine and take this opportunity to buy some of your Christmas gifts as well as take part in our special Christmas Draw!

On Friday, 2nd December we will be at the Old Inn, Kilmington to celebrate our last monthly get together this year! So again please join us in an evening of 'good cheer' and of course outstanding comradeship.

Hopefully this now brings you all up to date, but before I close this episode it would be remiss of me if I did not personally thank John Watts for his incredible patience and persistence in highlighting our membership information and maintaining continuous dialogue with what appears to be a fairly incapable agency now responsible for RBL membership (*if you have difficulties, please don't give up or leave us; either contact John or myself and we will do our utmost to resolve any issues you may have*). I would also like to thank our secretary, Jean Falconer for her excellent support and for keeping me on the straight and narrow (*it takes quite a lot*). As we go to press our membership remains close to 140, which is incredible, but of course if you have any questions please don't hesitate to call myself, your Shepherd or any other member of our committee.

Don't forget, we are also on the Kilmington Village Website!!

Finally, my thanks to you all for supporting us in what has been yet again an excellent and outstanding year for the Kilmington Branch. In case I don't see you before I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy, prosperous New Year!

Cdr Stafford Seward OBE RN Rtd
(Chairman RBL Kilmington Branch)