

"SANDBAG"

WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER

Editor Tony Goddard 01963-824193

NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

Volume 12 Issue 4

Branch secretary Steve Lee 01963-34374

July/August
2016

Next social event Saturday 24th September at the Millers Inn—2 p.m.

AGM 2016

We had a very successful AGM on 15th June when we elected the new committee for 2016/17. The future emphasis will be on transmitting information to members by Sandbag newsletter and holding quarterly meetings followed by a social event at the Millers Inn, the next social event is covered on the back page and is on 24th September. Next meeting will be announced in the September/October Sandbag. We know we have some good skittles players in the branch and we will be training up as the last time we challenged the CHF and AAC we lost decisively to them.

Our new branch committee was formed from the nominations received which I advised in the last Sandbag and are as follows:-

Tony Goddard - Chairman, Steve Lee - Secretary, John Pennington - Vice Chairman, Andy Chilton - Treasurer, Rita Jee - P resident, David Roberts Vice President and Terry Williams - Standard Bearer.

Visit to Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth 7th October

As I mentioned before, the part of the trip to Dartmouth which includes the tour of Britannia Royal Naval College is full. I do have a waiting list for anyone who would like to be included. The list for the Dartmouth town trip (without the tour) is now open for names. I have just 20 places on this part of the trip so please let me know if you wish to go to Dartmouth only. I will include final details in the next Sandbag but the departure time has been set for 8.30 a.m. with the tour commencing at 2 p.m. Would all those going please now pay for the trip. I have received the cost of the tour from you so the cost now will be a further £12 each for the coach travel. A decision whether to have a cream tea included or tea, coffee and biscuits will be announced.

Commando Helicopter Force

I am very pleased to announce that following his promotion (which I announced a few months ago) Colonel Lenny Brown, Royal Marines, has taken command of the Commando



Colonel L A Brown MBE

Helicopter Force. You will remember Colonel Brown has been our guest of honour at two of our recent branch dinners whilst serving as deputy commander at the CHF. He has contacted me and confirmed his desire to continue our close relationship with the CHF which goes back 8 years. We are both in the process of exploring ways of expanding our friendship and support of the CHF.

Poppy Appeal 2016

As we go to print the current total for Wincanton Poppy Appeal 2016 is £17,445. There are still amounts to be credited so I am pleased to say we are on track to continue our record amounts.

Old Faithful commemoration

Although the "Old Faithful" Flying Fortress crash commemoration fell on the same day as Armed Forces Day - 25th June, this year members of the branch held our traditional commemoration at the memorial on Bayford Hill. John Pennington led the gathering and gave the Exhortation, Terry Williams carried the branch standard. Wreaths were laid by David Humphries and Michael Watts.

Armed Forces Day 2016 - 25th June.

We were quite lucky with the weather during the afternoon of Armed Forces Day but we are sure the heavy rain in the late morning deterred many people from attending. In the event we did have a reasonable attendance and everyone had a good time. There was a minor glitch when we heard at that HMS Heron Band would be delayed and were not able to open the show but our good friends at Wincanton Silver Band saved the day along with Wincanton Amateur Dramatics Society (WADS). We were treated to some good solo clarinet playing from a member of the band and then the Silver Band proper started their slot early with some excellent music. HMS Heron Band arrived just before 2 p.m. and their marching display and band music was greatly appreciated. WADS members also stepped in with songs from their forthcoming show which certainly livened up the audience. Marines from the Commando Helicopter Force set up an excellent display of vehicles and weaponry which attracted great interest from the public and the two flight simulators from the Air Training Corps were very popular.



Wincanton Silver Band



HMS Heron Band

We were very grateful to our enthusiastic helpers, Ann, Enid, Eve and Joyce constantly serving teas and soft drinks along with those excellent poppy cakes supplied by Helen of Image Cakes which completely sold out! John, William & Enid (as well as Enid serving the teas) sold over £50 worth of books and bits and pieces. Christine and Pat did another great job with the raffle this year and sold £303 in raffle tickets. For the first time we enjoyed having with us 2nd Templecombe Scout group who did those excellent BBQ burgers & bangers. From the BBQ they were able to make a £30

donation to our Poppy Appeal. Again we had the support of Adam Brown the Somerset Poppy Appeal representative who brought with him the latest Poppy Appeal items for donations and raised £65 which will be credited to our Poppy Appeal totals.



Pat & Christine doing the raffle



Part of Wincanton Amateur Dramatics Group

I would like to thank all those who helped clear up and helped on the day and to acknowledge the contribution of Steve Lee, who did a considerable amount of work, attending meetings and organising things generally with me. Without Steve we could not have done it. We are able to make a donation to Wincanton Poppy Appeal of £401 from this event.

Battle of the Somme 100th anniversary.

In common with towns and communities throughout the Country we observed the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July. We chose to have our ceremony at 11 a.m. which enabled Revd. Peter Dixon, Chaplain to 1 Regiment Army Air Corps, to be present to officiate for us as the military had their commemoration earlier that day. We were very fortunate too to have soldiers from 1 Regiment Army Air Corps to be an honour guard and stand vigil at the war memorial. The timings also enabled Sgt. Ian Scullion RM to be present and play Last Post for us.



I am so very grateful to the Revd Dixon for organising such a meaningful service and for all his assistance with the Order of Service and format etc. I am sure we all felt the emotion of the day and what happened 100 years ago. We particularly wished to honour our six soldiers who were killed at the Battle of Somme, two of whom - Walter Humphries and Walter Talbott were both killed on the first day of that infamous battle. Our other four soldiers George Cash, John Goodfellow, Lewis Vallis and Henry Wadman died later in the fighting which went on until the November of 1916.

As a poignant gesture the Royal British Legion suggested that as part of the observance of the centenary a symbolic blast of a whistle denoting “over the top” should be sounded and Steve Lee gave the three blasts on a replica of the whistle used at the time. We were so pleased to be joined by students from King Arthur’s School who gave four very moving readings of contemporary letters of soldiers who took part in the battle. We were greatly privileged to have had such distinguished honoured guests, Howard Ellard—Mayor of Wincanton and several councillors, Robert Mansaugh OBE—County President RBL, Robert McDonald—County Chairman RBL and Lt. Col. Gavin Rundle—Officer Commanding 1 Regiment Army Air Corps. I felt very privileged too in being asked to lay a wreath for Walter Talbott on behalf of Walter’s family in Wales.

John Spragg has compiled a DVD covering the event and anyone interested in obtaining a copy should contact me. A modest donation for Poppy Appeal would be appreciated.



<p style="text-align: center;">August trip 20th August Taunton/Bishops Lydeard/Minehead</p> <p>I may have confused people on our trip to Sidmouth by saying that the August trip would be a different date but just to clarify, the date of the August trip is 20th August as originally shown in the last Sandbag.</p> <p>The format is as follows:- Leave Wincanton Memorial Hall at 9 a.m. and make a one hour coffee stop in Taunton, then we will go to Bishops Lydeard steam train station to enable anyone who wants to go on the steam train to Minehead to board there. The cost of a standard single train ticket to Minehead is seniors £11.40, adult £12.70 and children £6.20 which is payable at the station. If enough people want to go on the steam train I am happy to book a group discounted ticket using my own credit card. I will advise members the new price once I know if we can get a group wishing to go on the train and members can pay me direct.</p> <p>Those who do not wish to go on the steam train can stay on the coach and continue to Minehead. The coach will park in the coach park at the side of the steam train station so it will be easy for everyone to connect up for the journey home late afternoon. Cost of the coach remains at £12 adults and £6 children.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Meet our military friends 24th September.</p> <p>Mindful of our very long standing relationship with the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) which culminated in us “adopting” the unit in 2008 and now our firm association with 1 Regiment Army Air Corps, we feel we would like to make a statement of support to our military friends. Many military families now live in Wincanton and for years naval and marine personnel have made Wincanton their home. Many have set up permanent home here and lots have retired here too. We at Wincanton RBL feel we would like show our feelings and with this in mind we are holding a “Friends & Families” afternoon on 24th September at the Millers Inn. The event will start at 2 p.m. and we will be providing light refreshments, we will have things for children to do and we will also be challenging both the CHF and AAC to skittles. So we need volunteers for our skittle team and we hope not to be beaten as we were on the last occasion we were rash enough to challenge them to skittles. We hope that in late September the weather may be kind and we can take advantage of the beer garden. Transport could be available for those who wish. It is a free event.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wareham and Lulworth Cove—17th September</p> <p>We will be going to Lulworth Cove on 17th September with a coffee stop at Wareham. We will leave Wincanton at 9 a.m. and arrive in Wareham around 10.45 a.m. leaving around noon and go then to Lulworth Cove for the afternoon.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RBL announces a “free will service”</p> <p>I am not sure if a letter I received was sent to me as branch chairman or as an individual member so just in case you are not aware here is the information. The RBL is now part of the “Free Wills Network” and now offers our supporters a free Will writing service. Please excuse me if you already know but I feel it is such a valuable service that I should advise everyone. To find information about writing a free Will either send an email to freewill@britishlegion.org or telephone any one of these numbers :- 0203 053 7087 - 0203 207 2253 or 0203 053 78129.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Royal Navy Historic Flight</p> <p>Several years ago we had an amazing visit to the Royal Navy Historic Flight at RNAS Yeovilton. We have received another invitation and we are in the process of firming up a date. The intention is to go by our own cars, sharing where possible. It will be during the autumn and I will announce a date hopefully on our August trip, I will also ensure other members are alerted.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Festival of Remembrance 2016</p> <p>We did discuss the possibility of making a branch visit to the afternoon performance of the Festival of Remembrance this year on 12th November but only a handful of people showed interest. Tickets are now available so if you wish to make your own way there, you can get these online at www.royalalberthall.com or by phone on 0207-589-8212. Tickets for the evening performance are not obtainable elsewhere and our four places were allocated on a first come basis.</p>