



"SANDBAG"
WINCANTON AND DISTRICT
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER
 Editor Tony Goddard 01963-824193



NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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Branch secretary Steve Lee 01963-34374

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Next meeting is a Coffee Morning at the Memorial Hall 22nd October from 10 a.m.

Monthly coach trips

I am finding it increasingly difficult to budget for the monthly coach trips and have found there has been lesser numbers attending all trips this year - for many reasons. Unfortunately our trip to Wareham and Lulworth Cove planned for 17th September had to be cancelled as there were only 12 people booked. I had a very narrow escape in being able to cancel the trip - without financial penalty, but I am sure I will not be able to rely on this happening again. In future would those wishing to come on the trips please confirm two weeks prior to the trip date and send in the payment. If I do not have the required number by two weeks before I must then cancel it. We do have a separate non charity bank account for the purpose of trips and there is an emergency fund which mainly came about because our very successful trip to Sandhurst last year was full and ticket sales were beyond the amount I budgeted for - also the meal costs on the day were much less than expected. If numbers remain as low as they have been I may have to end making these trips, which would be a last resort action ! Increasing the £12 cost - which it has been for many years is not an option as it would be counter productive.

Ted Morley

Sadly since the last Sandbag was published one of our longest serving members, Ted Morley, passed away. Ted once proudly showed me his membership card dated 1961 and amused me greatly when he told me his future father in law, Bill Rumbold, made Legion membership a "condition" of Bill giving his blessing to Ted marrying his daughter Carol ! Ted served his National Service in the Royal Air Force and because of his mechanical and driving skills he served most of that time as the driver to the commanding officer at RAF Northolt close to London. On our recent visit to RMA Sandhurst Ted explained it was not his first visit there as he had been there before on duty with his C.O. and he felt privileged to have done many interesting things during his RAF days. His experiences probably influenced Ted's future life with motor cars. Always a true gentleman and keen Legion member Ted will be sadly missed. Our sincere condolences go out to Carol on her loss.



Coffee morning 22nd October

We will be holding a Coffee Morning on 22nd October in the Memorial Hall at 10 a.m. This will also launch Poppy Appeal 2016/17. I do hope you can attend. If you have any questions or issues to bring up please let me know and we can discuss then.

Welcome to two new members Richard Simpson and Margaret Webb who joined us this month.

Olive Moldrum

Also during the summer we heard the sad news that Olive Moldrum passed away, Olive was recently presented with the Poppy Appeal long service award for her 35 years of selling poppies in the Penselwood area. Olive is also remembered by those who worked at Cow & Gate.



Arthur Vickers VC

As I am sure you know, I visit the area of the Battle of Loos quite often but it was only recently that I found out that one of our members - Rob Dickenson, great uncle won the Victoria Cross during the first Battle of Loos on 25th September 1915. Rob's uncle, was Arthur Vickers VC. As well as receiving the Victoria Cross Arthur Vickers also was awarded France's highest medal for bravery the Croix De Guerre.

Arthur Vickers joined the regular army in 1902 and served six years with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment after which he worked for the General Electric Company at Witton, Birmingham. A few days after the outbreak of war he rejoined the Regiment's 2nd battalion who had just returned to England from garrison duties at Malta. They then moved to Belgium in October 1914. During the summer of 1915 preparations were being made for a major battle near the coal mining town of Loos and the Royal Warwicks as part of the 22nd Brigade moved from Belgium into France. The Royal Warwicks went into attack at 6.30 a.m. on 25th September opposite a German strongpoint known as Quarry Trench. In the face of terrific fire they reached the German front line only to find as many other units had found that the barbed wire had not been cut by artillery fire. Pte. Arthur Vickers, on his own initiative, and displaying tremendous courage, stood up in broad daylight under heavy fire and cut two gaps in the wire with cutters enabling his comrades to continue their assault. For this act of extreme bravery he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

His gallant action contributed largely to the success of the assault, which resulted in the capture of 60 prisoners and the achievement of the objective. An indication of the severity of the fighting that day is that after the attack the Battalion could only muster 5 officers and 140 men. The rest were either killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Private Vickers received his Victoria Cross from King George V at Buckingham Palace in March 1916. He continued to serve with the Regiment until 1935 when he retired as a Sergeant. After leaving the army he worked for Lucas Ltd, and served in the Home Guard during World War II. He died aged 62 in 1944 and was buried at Witton Cemetery in Birmingham.

Next April a group from Wincanton Royal British Legion will be attending a ceremony near Loos commemorating another Victoria Cross winner - John Cunningham VC and have been promised a tour of the area to include the site of Arthur Vickers epic action. John Cunningham was killed in action in April 1917 in the later fighting around Vimy Ridge which is close to Loos.



The picture on the left shows a view from Quarry Trench and the chalk spoil is from recent excavations of a tunnel complex, which is in an extremely dangerous condition. Nearby was still visible fragments of shells and ordnance in the process of being removed by French army specialists.



Cheque presentation by Wincanton Amateur Dramatics Society

Those of us who went to our Armed Forces Day event greatly admired the young people from Wincanton Amateur Dramatics Society (WADS) who attended. Along with Wincanton Silver Band they helped entertain us when HMS Heron Band were delayed and we all enjoyed the experience - so much so that many of us attended their Summer Show shortly afterwards and what a fantastic evening that was ! During our Armed Forces Day event the group from WADS promised us a donation to Poppy Appeal from the ticket sales of their show. True to their word they presented a cheque to Sandra on Sam's behalf for £100 to Wincanton Poppy Appeal. Steve & I have asked them if they can come again next year to Armed Forces Day and they have agreed. As I said, when several of us attended their show it was a wonderful evening and I for one came away on a "real high". They are having two further shows coming up, the next is entitled "A Spoon Full of Sugar" and is an evening of songs from the musicals. It takes place on 24th September in the Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m. and tickets which are available from Wincanton Sports Centre or on the door cost £5 each. WADS Winter Pantomime this year is The Legend of King Arthur and will be taking place in February, I will put full details in Sandbag when known.

We are most grateful for all the support from WADS and for their generous donation to Wincanton Poppy Appeal.

Paddy Fox's medals

Paddy's sister Edie (in centre of photo) recently donated Paddy's medals and cap badge to the Discovery Museum in Newcastle Upon Tyne. They are now displayed at Light Dragoons Gallery. Paddy's long standing friends Les (far right) and Judith Crompton (2nd left) were present at the ceremony. Les is a member of our branch and although lives in South Shields has visited Wincanton and attended the Branch Dinner. Les regularly receives Sandbag !



Dartmouth 7th October

It seems a long time ago when we first arranged this trip but our trip to Dartmouth is now next month. We will depart at 8.30 a.m. on 7th October from the Memorial Hall and we should arrive in Dartmouth (with a comfort stop) around 11 a.m. For those going to the college visit PLEASE don't forget to bring your photo ID with you, it is most important. We do still have a few places left on the coach for those who would just like to visit Dartmouth without the college tour so please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to come cost is £12 as usual.

Beer & Cheese tasting evening 26th October

Our member and great supporter John Sansom is organising a Beer & Cheese tasting evening. This time it is not in aid of the RBL but other good causes - and should be a good evening out. It will be held at The Grange, Horsington at 7 p.m. on Wednesday 26th October. As well as the beer and cheese Mark Woodhouse of the Blandford Brewery will be giving an interesting talk. Tickets cost £5 and are available at the Half Moon, Horsington or The White Horse South Cheriton. Information from John on 07974662145.

Visit to Royal Navy Historic Flight

Steve has been working on us visiting the Royal Navy Historic Flight at RNAS Yeovilton. Although the date is not positively confirmed he is working on it being 19th October. We are also trying to make this coincide with an invitation to The Commando Helicopter Force, our adopted unit on the same day. We intend going by our own cars and leaving them at the Fleet Air Arm Museum where we will pick up a coach to take us around. We will all share lifts so if anyone is without a car or wishes to come in a shared car we will coordinate. Sorry this not final details but I must get this in this Sandbag to advise everyone. Please contact Steve or I if you wish to come. The event is free of charge.

Carol Concert 3rd December

This is an advance note for your diary. On Saturday 3rd December there will be a Carol Concert to be held in the Memorial Hall. It will be a joint event with "Wincanton Live at Home" and our branch. Full details in the next Sandbag but the evening will be full of your favourite Christmas carols which you will be able to sing along to.

New keeping fit initiative

South Somerset District Council are introducing "Walking Football" at Wincanton Sports Centre (BA9 9SP) on 19th September, between 5 and 6pm. Walking football is a great way to stay active, socialise and meet new people, and it is suitable for all abilities. The first 6 weeks are free and it is open to both men and women. This may be an opportunity for members who are thinking of staying active throughout the winter.

Remembrance period 2016

Remembrance time is rapidly approaching and although our observance is always the same timeless occasion it may be necessary just to reminding everyone of the format and timings again.

Remembrance Day 11th November. We will gather at the War Memorial at the Memorial Hall assembling at 10.45 a.m. The Two Minutes Silence and Last Post will be at 11 a.m. followed by a brief wreath laying at the Old Faithful Memorial at Bayford Hill.

Remembrance Sunday 13th November. The parade assembles at the Memorial Hall at 2.15 p.m. and march off is at 2.30 p.m. this will be preceded by the placing of crosses for our War Dead around the Memorial by the brownies and cubs. Church service commences at 3 p.m. in the Parish Church of St. Peter & St. Paul

Poppy Appeal 2015/16

Although we have not yet been advised of any tax credits this year, accounts have been submitted showing that we collected £17,564 over the last year. Thanks to everyone who help achieve another record year.

Due to unforeseen commitments too many of our friends from the Army Air Corps cannot attend our "Families Day" event at the Millers Inn on 24th September we therefore have had to cancel this event. We do hope to meet up to hold a similar event in future and will advise everyone.