



"SANDBAG"

WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER



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NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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Remembrance 2020

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Remembrance 2020

It has been a very difficult few months for many reasons and our compliance with government Covid 19 regulations and restrictions. It was a very fine line we had to draw in maintaining our Remembrance obligations with the respect we wished to show. It was not easy as regulations constantly changed but our committee were determined we would have a meaningful commemoration and we carried on knowing we must observe the sacrifices made by our



town in war. As I mentioned in the last Sandbag our VJ Day commemoration worked well and this formed the basis of our Remembrance period commemoration. We realised we had three situations to cover this year, Remembrance Sunday 8th November, Armistice Day 11th November and laying of a wreath at the Old Faithful, Flying Fortress memorial. The whole period needed close monitoring and "risk assessments" done as never before. We also felt that we could not fully publicise the commemorations as this may encourage public gatherings which were not allowed under government regulations. Almost at the very last moment a clear message was sent out by the government that Remembrance events could take place but there were complications and restrictions. We would like to note that we greatly appreciated the massive help we received from our rector and chaplain, the Reverend Alison Way, even though Alison had only been in Wincanton under a year she planned an excellent Remembrance service for us, taking into account all our local needs. Not only one service but several because at the very last moment with only 3 days to go everything was changed by the government and an early morning indoor church service planned to lay wreaths in the Parish Church War Memorial had to be cancelled and all plans changed. We were most grateful also to David Shave who played Last Post and Reveille at all our ceremonies (Remembrance Sunday, 11th November at the Memorial Hall and also at the "Old Faithful" memorial on Bayford Hill).

We realise most members are probably using the internet. If you could advise me of your email address I will send your Sandbag by email and this will help us keep costs down. Thanks for your help. Tony



Colour party with Dave Roberts (Vice President and Chairman Rob Dickinson, facing memorial)

On Remembrance Sunday because of public self distancing we were obliged to hold our commemoration within the closed off grounds of the Memorial Hall and we had marshals encouraging members of the public to observe their distancing. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the town by the mayor and district councillor, along with representatives of the police, youth organisations including our army cadets and guides, women's contributions and Wincanton RBL members laying wreaths for the Armed Forces. Our local military unit, 1 Regiment Army Air Corps sent a warrant officer to lay their wreath and supplied the Colour Party.

David Shave from Wincanton Silver Band played Last Post and Reveille with Rob Dickinson saying the Exhortation and David Hill the Kohima Blessing. The names of our Fallen were read out jointly by Tony Goddard and Rob Dickinson at the War Memorial as it was not possible to in the church this year. The weather did not help us much though as fine drizzle persisted throughout all of the commemoration. Although

we did not encourage public attendance several townspeople stood in the street and paid their respects.



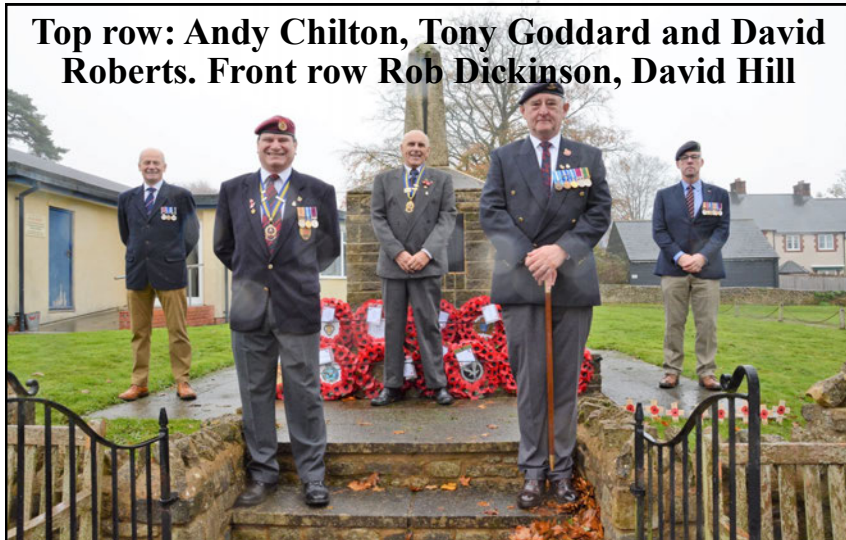
(pictured left is David Hill our parade marshal and David Shave from Wincanton Silver Band playing Last Post.)



Tony lays the branch wreath

It was very unfortunate that we were unable because of government regulations to have our planned service within the parish church on Remembrance Sunday but we did fulfil all our intentions albeit outside. The normal parade was not allowed under the same regulations. On Armistice day, 11th November at 11 o'clock a short outdoor service took place around the War Memorial again David Shave played Last Post and Rob and Tony said the Exhortation and Kohima Blessing after which a small group went to the Old Faithful memorial at Bayford Hill where Last Post and Exhortation was repeated again.

Top row: Andy Chilton, Tony Goddard and David Roberts. Front row Rob Dickinson, David Hill



The photos were taken by Brian Sales whose help at all the ceremonies was of great assistance, Brian operated the sound equipment and supervised the Memorial Hall involvement.



On 11th November we held the very short service with Rob (left) giving the Kohima Blessing and Tony the Exhortation. The Revd. Alison Way (right) led us with prayers and again David Shave played Last Post and Reveille. Following this a small group went to the Old Faithful Memorial and laid wreaths with David Shave again playing Last Post.





Beryl Griffin

Just after we went to print with the last Sandbag we discovered that our long standing and very active member Beryl Griffin had passed away on 16th August.

Beryl's life was so full and a story of great community service. Over the years Beryl helped us with Poppy Appeal and during the Remembrance period she took an active part for several years laying the wreath in church on behalf of the Women's Services.

On hearing about Beryl, Rob remarked how his daughters had such good times in the Wincanton Guides and Brownies under Beryl's leadership especially the pack holidays with the outdoor cookouts. Hundreds of girls benefited from the experience and so many have mentioned this. Anne Rowlands too remembered Beryl fondly and how she and Beryl founded the Wincanton Rangers in 1987. Beryl joined the ATS

(Auxiliary Territorial Service), the women's branch of the British Army, during the Second World War and because of her passion for driving loved every minute. When Beryl was promoted to Lance Corporal she found that her new duties did not include driving so her solution was stay out at night and not report back until late. Success - she was demoted back to Private and her motor driving resumed. Beryl married her husband Fred, whom she met in the ATS whilst he too was in the army in 1947. During service in Germany Beryl rescued a soldier from drowning in a lake.

Beryl's passion for driving continued when she lived in Sussex after the war where she passed her tests for a heavy good vehicle class one license enabling her to drive much bigger vehicles. In fact when she moved to Wincanton she then drove the Wincanton mobile library, no mean achievement around our narrow lanes.

Beryl was such a "nice person" and always good humoured, she is sadly missed and our sincere condolences go to her daughter Pauline and son Michael and their families.

Beryl did so much for our community and I felt I would like to include in full this tribute to Beryl from Anne Rowlands

"Beryl was such a lively character. We first met in 1987 when we set up the Wincanton Ranger Unit for girls aged 14 to 18. We had many wonderful adventures together and her support was invaluable. As well as being a Ranger Leader, Beryl, was, for many years, Snowy Owl for the 1st Wincanton Brownies and later Wincanton District President. To a lot of young people in the community Beryl was just known as 'Snowy'.

She was instrumental in running Brownie Pack holidays and took to the stage at the biennial Scout & Guide Shows. She loved adventure and was thrilled when we held a Promise celebration for two of the Rangers in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. Later, the same day, we waved to the Queen as she passed our small group of Rangers as we stood on the Mall. The Queen waved back, and Beryl talked about that special day on many occasions.

Beryl was young at heart. As a treat for her 90th birthday we took her to see the Abba tribute band at the Octagon (her choice) and she was soon up and dancing in the aisles. There was no stopping her.

A stalwart of the community. Someone who gave so much time to the Guide Association, the Arthritis Association, the Wincanton Museum and was a great supporter of the annual Poppy Appeal. More recently Beryl joined the newly formed "Wincanton Trefoil Guild" where members serve their communities and support Guiding (and Scouting) across the UK.

It is with much sadness that I have lost my dear friend."

Anne Rowlands

