



**RBL Y SERVICES  
MEMORIAL GARDEN  
MARKS THE START.**

See story page 3

**CONTENTS**

2. Chairman's message / Members' Greetings
3. The NMA – All lit up
4. Wall Calendar / Pete Shepherd RIP
5. Garats Hay History
6. Snippets / Will Writing / FOYSM
7. Easyfundraising
8. The 2021 Census
9. ANZAC Day / Remembrance with JSSU(V)
- 10/11. Poetry from Jobe



*Have a Very  
Merry Christmas  
And a  
Happy New Year!*



It is with great sadness that we report the death of Branch Member  
**DD Smith**  
(Ex The Royal Corps of Signals)  
May he rest in peace.



It is with great sadness that we report the death of Branch Member  
**Chris Carr**  
(Ex The Intelligence Corps)  
May he rest in peace.

## Chairman's message

Dear Branch Members,

First of all, on behalf of our Branch President, myself and your Branch Committee may I wish you all a:

### **Very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.**

2022 has been a quieter year in terms of Branch activities after the time and effort in the previous two years related to enhancing the Y Services Memorial and Garden at the NMA.

As a National Branch we do not, apart from the Branch Committee, meet up locally and the focus of our efforts as members of the Legion is largely fund raising. Despite this lack of contact, we manage to maintain and retain our membership numbers and the few events we do run, the Summer Gathering and the Remembrance Sunday service at Woodhouse, for example, are always well supported. So, thank you members one and all, for very frequently putting your hands in your pockets and or handbags to support the Poppy Appeal and the fund to maintain our plot at the NMA.

During the year, we have bid our last farewells to members who have died and, when and where possible, our Branch Standard has been paraded and a Branch condolence card sent to the bereaved families.

Whilst not replacing the ability of a local Branch to regularly meet up, our Branch website provides a useful 'shop window' both to attract new members and as a repository for photographs and snippets of Branch history of interest to our membership. So please do make use of our website and point potential new members to the information on how they can join the Legion and, of course, our Branch.

Our Facebook page has proved extremely popular, so much so that we have removed the chat room from the site, Facebook activity having taken over this role.

Finally, this informal monthly newsletter hopefully serves to keep you all updated on what the Branch is doing, as well as month by month, serving to keep a somewhat informal record of our Branch history. As always, contributions to the newsletter are always welcome and details of how you can send in your news items, jokes, war stories and more can be found at the foot of page 6.

Best wishes

Jim McDermott  
Branch Chairman

You can find back issues of the Branch Newsletter and other interesting stuff online at <https://garatshay.org.uk>



RBL Y SERVICES  
MEMBERS GREETING  
MESSAGE FACILITY  
(email:  
[jimm26489@gmail.com](mailto:jimm26489@gmail.com))

**Christmas Greetings to all who did  
National Service at Scharfoldendorf**  
from Branch member  
**Philip Bowles**

Phillip says:  
**"I am 87 and was there 1955/56. Are there any  
other survivors??...**  
**SAC Bowles 2718455. I now live in Thame  
OXON."**

Contact numbers supplied. If anyone wishes to get in touch with Philip please email:  
[jimm26489@gmail.com](mailto:jimm26489@gmail.com)

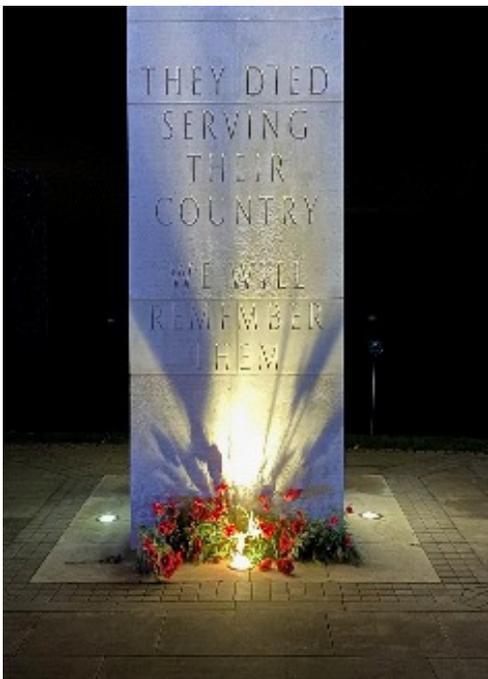
## NMA's Illuminated Arboretum event

Former Legion Trustee **David Whimpenny** visited the NMA in early December and sent us this report:

*I'm delighted to report that once again this year the Y Services memorial garden was chosen as the entry point to the NMA's **Illuminated Arboretum** event ensuring 17,000 visitors will pass through our site during the course of the event. If our own experience of the evening is reflective the majority are taking time to read the new sign and the inscription on the memorial. A poignant installation this year is the 258, a light display in memory of the 255 British Service Men and three civilians who died in the 1982 Falklands Campaign.*



Make a note to visit in 2023



## LIMITED EDITION - BRANCH WALL CALENDAR 2023

**A FEW COPIES REMAINING**

**ALL PROCEEDS TO THE POPPY APPEAL**

The theme for the Branch 2023 wall calendar is a miscellany of fascinating facts about Sigint related armed forces hats and badges and other stuff.

The Calendar is A4 size and comprises a front cover and (unsurprisingly) 12 pages, one for each month with plenty of space to pencil in your own important dates.

Warning – contains dates!

Orders can be placed by email to: **£5.00 plus £2.00 P&p**  
[jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com](mailto:jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com)



Orders will be sent by post on receipt of payment via BACS to:

Sort Code: **30-65-85**

Account No: **47985060**

Account name (if needed) **RBL Y CALENDAR 2023**

Reference: Your Name/Calendar

For details of how to pay by cheque please email: [jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com](mailto:jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com)

If ordering **more** than one calendar, please ask the cost of postage before sending your payment. Calendars will be despatched in a hard backed manila envelope.



**It is with great sadness that  
we report the death of  
former Intelligence Corps Analyst**

**Peter Shepherd**

**May he rest in peace.**

Whilst Peter Shepherd was not a member of the RBL, it is Legion policy that if the family of a deceased veteran request it, a Legion Branch Standard, if available, can be paraded at the funeral. We were happy to oblige and Dave Lawrence was in attendance at Peter's last farewell; a funeral with a jazz band in attendance.





## GARATS HAY POST WAR HISTORY – HELP (Still) NEEDED

Major Wayne Fielding, the XO at MOD Garats Hay, has received a small amount of material about the post war history of Garats Hay Barracks but would welcome more. He is looking in particular for photos of the post war site. It is appreciated that photography was forbidden when the site was up and running but if anyone has any photos showing how the camp looked they would be gratefully received. Even a pic of an end of course photo outside a building would be useful in creating a record of a now disappeared establishment. If you can help Wayne in any way with his quest, please email him direct on: [Truevillan@hotmail.com](mailto:Truevillan@hotmail.com)



A newspaper cutting from  
The Loughborough Echo May 1957

Clearly Garrat's Hay is mis-spelled and  
does not require an apostrophe  
but that's newspapers for you!



## SNIPPETS

Following sales of her book about Beaumanor in WW2 after the AGM in November, the author, Caroline Wessel, kindly donated £50.00 to the Branch's Poppy Appeal effort.

News of an interesting new military tenant at MOD Garats Hay is expected to be made public in the next few months

Branch Membership remains static at around 444 members.

Our Branch Standard was on parade on three occasions this month, sadly all for funerals which are reported elsewhere in this issue. Thanks as always to Dave Lawrence for his efforts.

## RBL FREE WILL WRITING SERVICE

The Legion Will-writing services help you write or update your Will and remember those close to you. Writing a Will is a vital part of getting one's affairs in order. If you are considering writing or updating yours, here is an ideal opportunity to get it done at no expense to you. The Legion offers three ways to write your Will for free:

Online

With a local solicitor

Over the phone on 020 8050 2686

See details online at: [Free will writing | Royal British Legion](#)



## FOYSM update

At its November 2022 Board meeting the Intelligence Corps Association (ICA) once more agreed to donate £500 to the Friends of the Y Services Memorial (FOYSM, pronounced foy-sum) This is a tremendous boost to the fund and, along with amounts pledged by Branch members via Standing-Order arrangements, sets us well on the way to be able to foot the NMA bill in 2023. Many thanks to everyone who has signed up to support FOYSM.

Contributions to the monthly Branch Newsletter are always welcome on any topics members think will be of general interest. We aim to provide uplifting stories and attempt not to duplicate messages already sent from RBL HQ. Copy should be sent by email. to the editor Jim McDermott at [jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com](mailto:jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com)

Preferred format is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately as JPEGs.

## Easy Fundraising



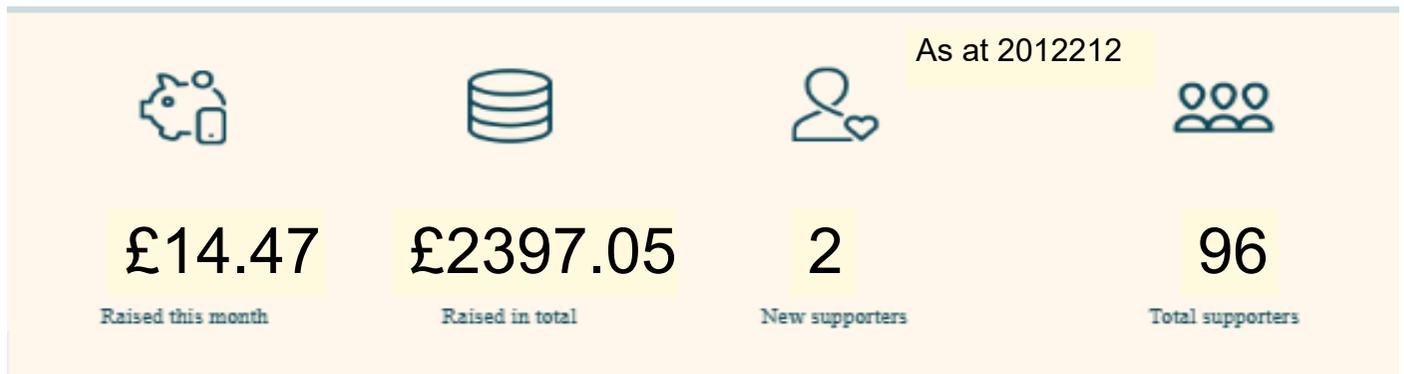
Micro donations from purchases made online via **easyfundraising** continue to contribute to our Branch efforts to raise funds year round for the Poppy appeal.

When you use easyfundraising every time you shop online, over 7,000 brands will donate to our Branch, including all the big names like eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, M&S, Just Eat, Uswitch and many more! This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying.

**If you haven't signed up to support us yet, it's easy and completely FREE. These donations really help us, so it would be great if you could take a moment to get started!**

You can find our easyfundraising page here:

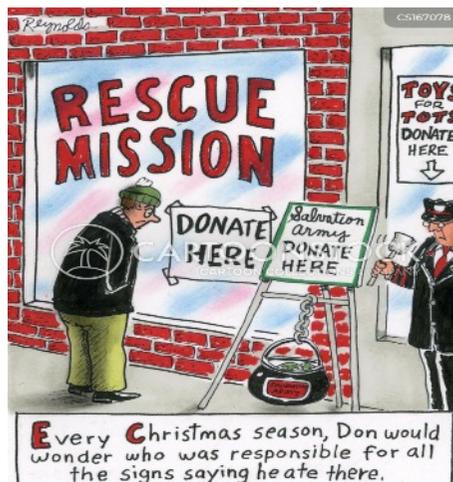
[https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm\\_campaign=raise-more&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=rm-en-e2](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_medium=email&utm_content=rm-en-e2)



Credit: CARTOONSTOCK



"Are there many ex-Paras in the British Legion then?"



"Don't spend £4.00 to dry clean a shirt. Donate it to The Salvation Army instead. They'll clean it and put it on a hanger. Next morning buy it back for £1.50!"

## UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales: Census 2021

The RBL mounted a huge and successful campaign to get an Armed Forces question into the 2021 census. The question on UK armed forces veterans was added to better meet the needs for service providers and others who support veterans, in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

### Here are some key statistics

In 2021, 1,853,112 people in England and Wales reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces (3.8% of usual residents aged 16 years and over).

Of the UK armed forces veterans in England and Wales, 76.3% (1.4 million people) previously served in the regular forces, 19.5% (361,000 people) in the reserve forces, and 4.3% (79,000 people) served in both the regular and reserve forces.

37,000 UK armed forces veterans (2.0%) lived in communal establishments and the remainder (slightly over 1.8 million, 98.0%) lived in households.

There were 1.7 million households (7.0% of all households) with one or more persons who had served in the UK armed forces.

The local authorities with the highest proportion of veterans included Gosport (12.5%), North Kesteven (10.2%) and Richmondshire (9.5%) in England, and Conwy (5.9%) in Wales.

**Editor's Note:** Richmondshire is not a renaming of all of the county of Yorkshire, it is a local government district of North Yorkshire. The data are correlated, analysed and displayed within local government districts

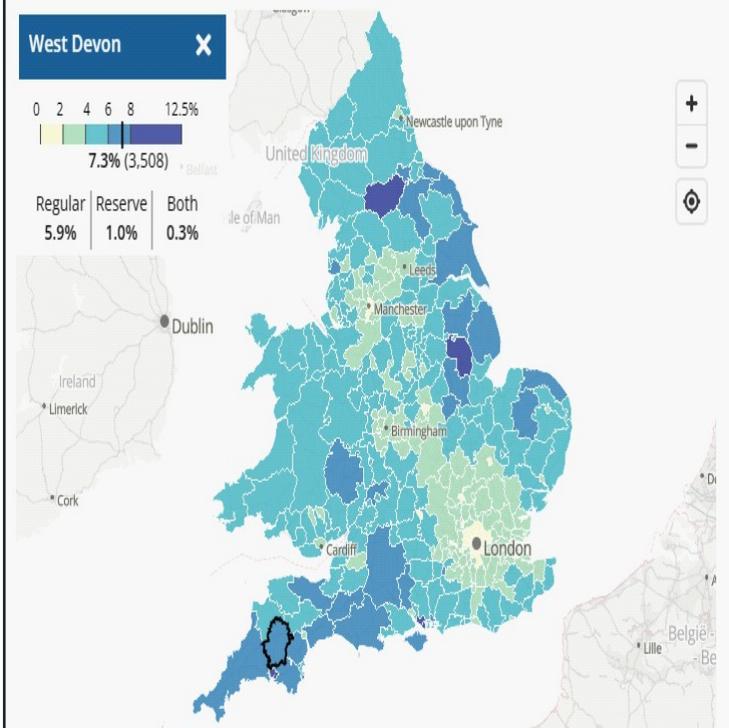
Data and analysis of the 2021 Census, veteran's can be seen at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/armedforcescommunity/bulletins/ukarmedforcesveteran senglandandwales/census2021>



Figure 3: The areas with the highest proportion of UK armed forces veterans tended to be near existing armed forces bases

Percentage of the population aged 16 years and over who had previously served in the UK armed forces, 2021, local authorities in England and Wales



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

## ANZAC DAY

Anzac Day (25th April) marks the anniversary of the first campaign that led to major casualties for Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. The acronym ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, whose soldiers were known as Anzacs. ANZAC Day remains one of the most important national occasions of both Australia and New Zealand, however, the ceremonies and their meanings have changed significantly since 1915. Anzac Day is now a National Day of Remembrance in Australia and New Zealand that broadly commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders "who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations" and "the contribution and suffering of all those who have served".



During the First World War there was a large military camp at Cannock Chase which became the base for the New Zealand Rifle Brigade. There was also a prisoner-of-war hospital with 1,000 beds, and both camp and hospital used the Cannock Chase burial ground.

Cannock Chase War Cemetery contains 97 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, most of them New Zealanders and it is only right and proper that we appropriately commemorate those individuals and their contribution.

In 2023 the Stafford Branch, Royal British Legion (RBL) will organise and host an ANZAC day "Drumhead" Service of Commemoration on Sunday 23rd April, beginning at 1045 a.m. and everyone is invited.

All visitors are asked to arrive by 1040 a.m. but it should be noted that the small cemetery car park will only be available to individually invited guests and disabled "blue badge" holders. It is therefore an individual responsibility for all other visitors to park in designated "Cannock Chase Car Parks" and make their way "safely", on foot, to the War Grave Cemetery.

The Stafford Branch RBL look forward to hosting you on the day, but would remind everyone that safety is paramount and therefore the ceremony will be managed in accordance with all RBL, War Graves Commission, Health and Safety and Extant COVID regulations. Individuals are reminded that they must be aware of and be in compliance with those regulations.



## JSSU(V)

Members of the JSSU (V) visited the NMA on Saturday 12th November. The Commanding Officer laid a wreath at the Y Services memorial while other unit members placed crosses of remembrance. Bernie Topham, SRWO at JSSU(V) advised Branch Secretary Chris Lowish that the Y Services plot is looking neat and tidy and is being properly maintained.

Branch member John Berry who will be known to many of our members was recently quite unwell and asked the editor if he might tell the story of his recent medical emergency. Here is John's epic tale in poetic form.



NHS  
University Hospitals  
Plymouth  
NHS Trust

### (Non) Compost Mentis!

*(Dedicated to the staff of Plymouth University Hospital Trust)*

It's that time of the year again! The bulbs need to go in!  
To get the best results we need to clear that compost bin!  
It's chocker with a whole year's worth! It's filled up to the top!  
When used on daffs and tulips we should get a decent crop.

To my delight, the harvest was a treasure to behold...  
Six fifty-litre bags of purest home-made compost..... gold!  
I'd lugged two bags into the greenhouse, went back for the rest  
when suddenly I felt this crushing feeling in my chest.  
I broke out in a clammy sweat, was wheezing, out of breath,  
so shuffled down the garden path. I felt like warmed-up death!

The surgery advised me I should contact 999.....  
and pretty smartish I then had an expert on the line,  
who quizzed me most succinctly, diagnosed my parlous state...  
Some 15 minutes later? Paramedics at the gate!!  
They dosed me up with asp'rin and then sprayed some GTN\*  
underneath my tongue and set the ECG up then.  
They decorated me with sticky discs with press-stud males  
(a better option, I would think than drawing-pins or nails!)  
They wired me up and got a print-out from their ECG.  
A bunch of squiggles on a strip of paper! Greek to me!  
The picture that **they** got was clearly not a pretty one.  
They 'phoned the Cardiac Department, sent that image on.  
At that point they were told to bring me in..... and PDQ!  
An ambulance ride! Claxon blaring! Flashing lights of blue!

At Derriford a team was waiting, decks were cleared for action.  
The whole shebang was flattering! I was the main attraction!  
Right there I was subjected to a brief interrogation .....  
they got my name and date of birth for data confirmation.  
The paramedics, both of them, continued to be quizzed.  
as through the labyrinth of pristine corridors we whizzed.

They slid me on a table as they pondered: "Wrist or groin?"  
I'm not sure how they made their choice. (They may have tossed a coin!)  
To my relief, they grabbed my wrist and **not** my nether region!  
If they'd done that, my language might have been a bit Glaswegian!  
A local anaesthetic numbed the wrist that they had chosen.  
"We're putting in a catheter! Your tiny wrist is frozen!"

They'd stripped me naked as a jaybird, (left me wearing.... socks!)  
then dressed me in one of those flimsy bum-revealing smocks!  
I lay there staring at the ceiling while they did their thing,  
aware of subdued chatter, now and then a "whir" and "ping."  
From what I gather from their chat, (of which I made no sense!)  
by some fine trick of surgery, they implanted two stents.  
It seems those arteries of mine were lined with gunge and crap.  
The stents went in to guarantee that blood flowed through the gap!  
(Choccy bickies, cheese and crisps and other treats as nasty  
were deemed to be the root-cause of my need for "Angioplasty")

Done and dusted in an hour, they whisked me to a ward.

They wired me up to monitors and started to record my blood pressure, my temperature, .....another ECG.....

An angel of a nurse brought me a welcome cup of tea! Screens flickering on both sides of my bed kept them abreast of any new developments within my pigeon chest.

More blood tests, then an X-ray, and a scan with ultra-sound.

The doctor and his team consult me on their daily round:

"I'm satisfied it's all gone well! We've remedied your ills!"

T'was then they sent me packing .....with a suitcase full of pills!

The worst part of the whole affair was not the operation but when they ripped those sticky tabs off, causing a sensation which can be best described as waxing-torture.. ...depilation!

And whilst I nursed those goose-pimples where once there had been hair a well-informed clinician briefed me well on after-care:

"Rehab or recovery from cardiac malaise is easily achievable..... if you can mend your ways!

Stop smoking! Filthy habit! Give it up before too late!"

(I gave up smoking (duty frees!) in nineteen sixty-eight!)

"Keep control of blood pressure!" A challenge that is fraught when England teams (except the girls!) keep teasing us at sport!

"A balanced diet doesn't mean a burger in each hand!

Eat oily fish (without the chips!) More salads should be planned!

Keep regularly exercised, keep physically active!"

I have to say I found advice on **walking** unattractive.

What?? Walking....without golf clubs! How can that be justified??

I'm told it is a torment I could manage.....if I tried!

"The most important factor, should you want to win this battle, is that you take the pills prescribed (though they might make you rattle!")

So, that's it! Home and hosed! Now being spoon-fed, wrapped in cotton, mollycoddled, cosseted, being pampered..... and spoiled rotten!

And everything's in "slomo" and my wife's become my nurse.

How could I go more slowly without being in reverse??

Still, here I am, alive and well, (unless I am mistaken!)

Indebted to the NHS, who clearly saved my bacon!

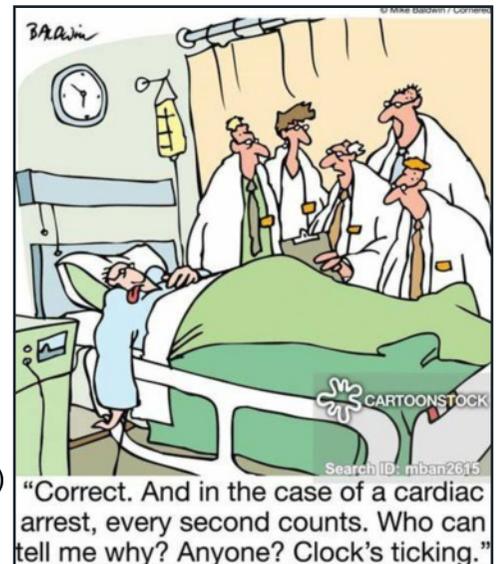
The compost? It will have to wait! I don't need much persuading, 'cos after all is said and done.....it really **is** degrading!

And any plans to empty out my badly clogged-up wormery?

They're now on hold for fear I end up in the Royal Infirmary!

Jobe 28 October 2022

- Glyceryl Trinitrate spray



I am sure we all wish Jobe (aka John Berry) a full and speedy recovery. Ed.

ENDS