



REMEMBRANCE
2023

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It is with great sadness that
we report the death of
Branch Member

Chris Jones

May he rest in peace

CHRIS JONES (RIP)

Chris was a Royal Signals SNCO, originally a Spec Op and then, from the mid-seventies, an EW(OP) Russian. He served in Gross Gusborn briefly in the early days of H Troop and then spent time in 225 Signal Squadron in Langeleben. It was during a second tour in Langeleben – by now 1 Squadron 14 Signal Regiment – that he suffered a serious knee injury whilst on adventure training in Berchtesgaden. This injury was very probably the reason he was never able to progress past Sergeant, because there can be no doubt that he was a very talented all-round operator and supervisor.



Chris found a new niche for himself after that injury and was soon recognised as one of the early Information Technology experts in the 13/14 Signal Regiment world. Chris' number one hobby was sailing his catamaran and he particularly enjoyed his tour in Berlin where he was a very keen member of the British Yacht Club, becoming famous for being one of the few sailors to survive a collision with Moby Dick, a rather large passenger/pleasure boat which plied the busy waters from Potsdam to Spandau.

In more recent years Chris took over as Chairman of the Royal Signals Langeleben Reunion Association where he will be very sorely missed. Chris was a popular and well respected member of the Y Services world and this was demonstrated by the great number of former friends and colleagues who attended his funeral in Bolton.



REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ST MARY-IN-THE-ELMS CHURCH, OLD WOODHOUSE, SUNDAY 12th NOVEMBER 2023

Remembrance Sunday is almost always cold, dry and sunny. This year (2023) there were grey skies over Old Woodhouse and as people arrived at St Mary in the Elms church a fine drizzle threatened



A packed congregation

to dampen the occasion. Once again, the tramp of marching soldiers and barked orders could be heard in the village as detachments of soldiers arrived. A squad of young Royal Signals soldiers from the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC) at Chicksands took their places in the choir stalls. Officers, Warrant Officers and NCOs from the Joint Services Signals Unit (Reserves) sat alongside a small group of men from the 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment currently stationed at MOD Garats Hay. In addition, a Royal Engineers veteran helped marshal the crowds and

a uniformed Royal Artillery SNCO assisted the clergy. A real feast for the hat badge spotters. The pews were quickly filled with people from the village, veterans and their families from the Royal British Legion Y Services Branch and members of the Royal Signals Association Loughborough Branch. A soldier carried the crucifer and led the clergy and the Legion Y Services Branch Standard into the church to the processional hymn 'O God our help in ages past'.



The Act of Homage

The minister called on all present to commit themselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between nations and to remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away. The President of the RBL Y Services Branch, Lt Col (Retd) Bill Nelson led the congregation in remembering those who have died for their country in war. He read out the names of those, from the village, killed in World War One and World War Two and those from the Y Service in more recent conflicts including Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and in the Chinook helicopter crash in 1994.

A recording of the bugle call, The Last Post, was played followed by a two-minute silence. At the first note of The Last Post, the Legion Standard Bearer, standing before the altar performed what is known as the act of homage, by lowering the Standard to touch the ground. At the sounding of Reveille the Standard was raised.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ST MARY-IN-THE-ELMS CHURCH, OLD WOODHOUSE, SUNDAY 12th NOVEMBER 2023...continued

During the singing of the hymn, Eternal Father Strong to Save, the Legion Branch Standard was presented to the minister and laid upon the altar. A young signaller in training at Chicksands read St Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. A senior Intelligence Corps officer then gave a reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew.



A lay reader gave an inspiring address calling for peace among nations particularly with respect to the ongoing war in Ukraine and the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

The minister led the congregation in prayer, praying for all who suffer as a result of conflict, for service men and women who have died in war, for members of the armed forces in danger, for civilians damaged by war, for peace makers and peace keepers, for those who bear the privilege of leadership and for those who support our armed

forces. A collection was taken during the Offertory Hymn for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The Standard was returned to the Y Services Branch Standard bearer who again performed the act of homage during the singing of the national anthem.

After the service in the church the Reverend Lisa led the congregation outside to the war memorial for prayers and an act of homage. An Intelligence Corps Warrant Officer recited the Kohima Epitaph:

***'When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,
For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.'***



Remembering the fallen

The words of the Kohima Epitaph provide a fitting tribute to the fallen and are engraved on the Memorial of the 2nd British Division in the cemetery of Kohima (North-East India). The verse is attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds and is thought to have been inspired by the epitaph written by Simonides of Ceos to honour the Greeks who fell at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480BC.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of Defence Intelligence and Security Centre Chicksands, JSSU (Reserves), MOD Garats Hay UK Strategic Command, The Loughborough Branch of the Royal Signals Association, The Royal British Legion Y Services Branch, the Beaumanor Listeners and the Parish Council.

The Reverend Lisa warmly thanked everyone who had been involved in organising and delivering the event including those who had remained outside in the rain as marshals. Fortunately, the rain held off during the short memorial service and wreath laying outside the church.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ST MARY-IN-THE-ELMS CHURCH, OLD WOODHOUSE, SUNDAY 12th NOVEMBER 2023...continued



The wreaths layers, line up

After the service and wreath laying, the congregation joined the clergy in the Old Woodhouse village hall for tea and biscuits, together with a great deal of lantern swinging as old soldiers, many of whom had been trained at the old Garats Hay barracks, related tales of their exploits to the younger soldiers present.



The Chicksands detachment get on parade



In a separate act of remembrance, Branch President, Bill Nelson placed a specially designed Y Services tribute at the foot of a tree near the church in Old Woodhouse

MEMBERS REMEMBRANCE MEMORIES 2023

Members' Memories – Peter Gilbert



During November a group of bikers along with Branch member Peter (aka Gunnie) Gilbert travelled to the graves and memorials of 7 holders of the Victoria Cross in the Leicestershire and Rutland area. A small wooden cross was laid at each grave/memorial. The citations were read out and Laurence Binyon's poem to the fallen was recited followed by the playing of last post and reveille.



Members' Memories – John Swann



John Swann laid a wreath at the war memorial in Tollerton, Notts

A Remembrance Memory



Major Gibbons* on Remembrance parade in Ypres with members of Nato staff.

*Not a member but well known to members who served in Dannenberg

Members' Memories – Ted Roberts

A few years ago I took up the post of Clerk to Pirton Parish Council, a village in Hertfordshire. Since then I have done my best to attend their Remembrance Sunday ceremony. The local representative of the RBL always makes sure that we have a wreath and we donate a suitable sum to the Poppy Appeal. Numbers attending are not always great, but this year there were more than ever. It was interesting to see more ex-service personnel this year, although I didn't know who they were. It's a simple ceremony in front of the war memorial – the exhortation, silence, reading of the names on the memorial, wreath laying and prayers, with many retiring to the pub afterwards. The event appears to be yet another part of village life marking the passing of the seasons. The names from WW1 are particularly significant with whole families seemingly gone to war and not returned. It no doubt mirrors similar events in villages all over the country where a few gather together to remember. Long may it continue.



Members' Memories – Tony Moore

1. At 11:00hrs, Saturday 11th November 2023, a Service of Remembrance was held at the **War Memorial Homes, Scraftoft, Leicester**. The Homes form the War Memorial for the village and the service is regularly held on the Saturday of Remembrance weekend, more poignant this year as it fell on Armistice Day. The simple service, led by Fr Martin Court of All Saints Church, Scraftoft, followed the RBL template and wreaths were laid by Lt Col (Ret'd) David Young TD DL, on behalf of the Trustees of the Leicester & Leicestershire War Memorial Foundation (LLWMF), which owns the Homes, Cllr Peter Elliott, Chairman of Scraftoft Parish Council and Cllr Simon Galton, on behalf of the Leicestershire County Council. Tony Moore is Hon Sec of LLWMF. Contact sec.llwmf@gmail.com for more details about the Charity which offers accommodation to disabled former Service personnel of the County

2. Tony Moore, ex Intelligence Corps led a brief Act of Remembrance before the 09:00hrs service at the church of **St John the Baptist, Melton Mowbray**. Before the Act, Tony elaborated on the term Remembrance, drawing on the RBL website "What is Remembrance?"



Members' Memories - Fred Searle

The Veterans Volunteer Service, which is a newly formed charity was asked to attend the Littlehampton Academy Remembrance Ceremony this year. The academy has around 1,400 students. Apart from being so well attended the children were absolutely amazing in their response to us all. It was a truly solemn occasion and fantastic to see so many youths paying their respects to those who gave up their lives.



BRANCH AGM 2023 - MAIN POINTS

Around 30 members attended the 2023 Branch AGM in Loughborough. Key points from the meeting:

How we performed against our key objectives for 2023?

1. Increase our contributions to the Poppy Appeal – **Achieved**
2. Work towards increasing our membership to 500 – **Getting there (currently 430)**
3. Hold a Summer Gathering – **Achieved with great success**
4. Work towards ensuring the Branch is involved in supporting the Woodhouse local authority supporting the Remembrance Sunday event at Old Woodhouse - **Getting there**
5. Increase the number of members signed up to Gift Aid on their Legion membership fee – **currently standing at 49%**.



Our Branch Objectives and Plan for 2024:

1. Increase our contribution to the Poppy Appeal
2. Work towards increasing our membership to 500.
3. Maintain and engage existing members.
4. Hold a Summer Gathering.
5. Continue to involve the Branch in supporting the Remembrance Sunday event at Old Woodhouse.
6. New for 2024, further develop relationships with Chick-sands and JSSU(R).
7. Increase Gift Aid take up.

2024 SUMMER GATHERING AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Over the weekend of 19 -21 July 2024 the Branch will gather at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The focus of the weekend will be a memorial service in the Y Services' plot within the NMA. It will commence at 1030 on the Saturday morning which will leave attendees ample time to explore the remainder of the Arboretum and enjoy lunch in its restaurant.

The Branch committee will meet in the nearby village of Hamstall Ridware on the Friday afternoon and spend Friday and Saturday evening in the Shoulder of Mutton pub in the same village. We would be delighted to have other branch members join us.

Most of the pub accommodation has been already booked by the committee members but one double room is still available. There is also at least one Airbnb in the village. Details of the accommodation is as follows:

Shoulder of Mutton

Hamstall Ridware

Tel: 01889 504488

Please book directly through the pub quoting RBL. The Airbnb can be reached by email on blytheshepherdshuts@gmail.com

Other accommodation is available in the surrounding villages.

Please consider joining us for all or at least part of this Summer Gathering.



Make your donations go further with Gift Aid

Gift Aid is given by the government on donations to charities at a rate of 25p in the pound, so for every £1 you donate the government will give the charity a further 25p if you are a UK tax payer. This means that a £20 donation will be worth £25. **Most importantly your annual Legion membership subscription counts as a donation.** Currently we have just under 50% of our membership signed up to Gift Aid, it would be great if we could increase this percentage. This is yet another easy and painless way of contributing to the Poppy appeal. For full details of how to sign up for Gift Aid go to the link below.

[Gift Aid | Royal British Legion](#)

Scan the QR code below to access our very own Branch Website, read a bit of history, browse back copies of this newsletter and more...



Chairman's Message

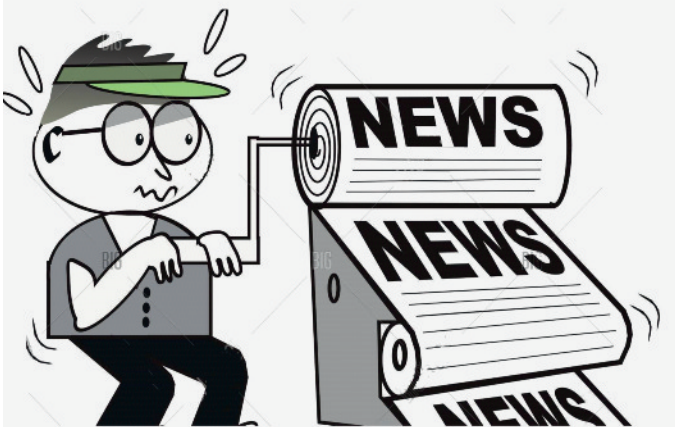
Dear Members,

November has been a busy month. We held a well attended AGM in Loughborough on Saturday 11 November 23 and an equally well attended Remembrance Service at St Mary in the Elms church in Old Woodhouse on 12 September 23. In between these two events your Branch committee, wives and partners and several members attended a dinner at the Link Hotel in Loughborough during which much lantern swinging took place. Many thanks to the several members who submitted their Remembrance memories for this issue. Notes on key points from the 2023 AGM are reported on page 8. Of particular note is the fact that we raised £41 from donations for Legion merchandise and this will go to the Poppy Appeal - every little helps.

As Christmas rapidly approaches and you start to buy Christmas presents online please remember to do so via easyfundraising and gain FREE donations for the Poppy appeal. Details on how to join (for free) if you are not already a signed up, on page 11.

Regards to one and all

Jim McDermott, Branch Chairman



Branch Chairman to Stand Down in 2024

At the 2023 AGM in November. Branch Chairman Jim McDermott, announced his intention to stand down from the role and leave the committee at the 2024 AGM. Committee member Steve Palfreyman has volunteered to stand for election as our next Branch chairman and will be shadowing Jim during 2024.

Wanted: New Newsletter Editor

Whilst it is not part of the job of chairman Jim McDermott also edits the monthly Branch Newsletter and someone will need to take on this task, at the latest in October 2024. The job involves writing, collecting and collating news items and articles of interest to our members, editing all the copy and graphics into an online readable document and distributing the finished newsletter to all our 400 plus members. Jim currently uses a publishing package (PagePlus X9) to produce the newsletter and distribution is achieved to all members with an email address, using MailChimp software. Whilst MailChimp is recommended for continued distribution (it is easy to use and is free) how the newsletter itself is produced can be the choice of whoever takes on the role of editor. Producing the newsletter takes around 4-6 hours per issue and preparing to transmit about 10 minutes. Ideally the new newsletter editor, would join the Branch committee. Anyone interested, or for more information, please contact Jim by email on: yseervices.chairman@rbl.community

MEMBERSHIP

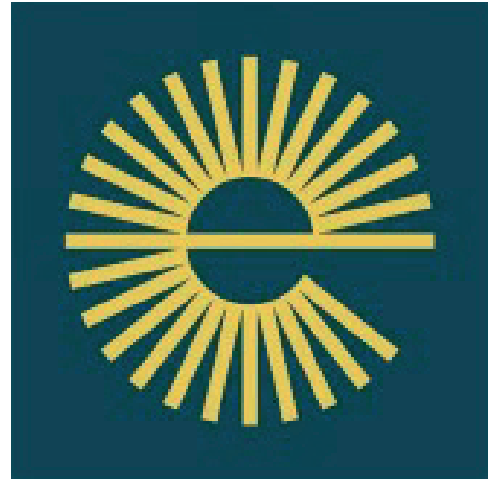
A warm welcome to new member

Jane Shillito

easyfundraising.org.uk

This month we raised **£31.86** all through members buying items online via easy fundraising - not one mountain was climbed nor a marathon completed - simply members buying online - from the comfort of their own home (members enjoying comfortable homes is an assumption). All funds collected in this way go to the Poppy Appeal.

We have **117** members participating (**an increase of two this month**) and since we joined the scheme a total of **£2681.62** has been raised.



View our cause page online and sign up at:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/>

Or scan the QR code below
with your phone's camera



Thank you one and all for your kind contributions

Editor's Note:

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 as well as Branch news 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 Preferred format for text is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately please, as JPEGs.