



## The Royal British Legion – Seend Branch

### Report for the Annual Parish Meeting

We started our current year with a certain amount of trepidation following the restrictions that had been in place due to the pandemic and it was a great pleasure to commence holding our quarterly meetings around the table following 2 years of Zoom Conferencing. We were also recovering from the disappointment of having to cancel the Rededication of our War Memorial to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 8 February 2021.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our Annual Drumhead service in June, but our member, Major General Darren Crook marked the D Day commemorations by completing a Run of Remembrance from Fort Henry at Studland to the D Day Centre at Portland, a route that matched the 44 mile distance between Pegasus Bridge and Utah Beach in Normandy. The efforts of Darren and his team raised over £8500.00.

In July we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Royal British Legion by holding a Great Poppy Party at The Crown Inn Bishops Cannings raising £3500.00. A total of 11 members joined the coach trip to the RAF Museum Hendon where a most enjoyable day was had by all.

We were able to hold our Annual Remembrance Sunday parade and church service again after the Covid restrictions and the Annual Poppy Appeal in November broke all records as we had been unable to undertake proper collections for two years. A total of £10,400.00 was collected and special thanks go to Lewy Lewis for standing in Devizes Market Place for 100 hours (not all at once!!), collecting an amazing £3400.00.

Also, our Standard Bearer and Secretary Kevin Toft was invited with his wife Karen to the Freemasons Dinner in Devizes. Thereafter, the Grand Master Mr Peter O'Shea presented a cheque for £431.00 for our funds.

Our village War Memorial was dedicated 100 years ago in February 1921 and without doubt, the highlight of our year was the visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> December of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall in her role as Patron of the War Memorials Trust. Following a short service of rededication in the church the Duchess was escorted to the memorial by myself and The Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire Mrs Sarah Troughton where she laid a bouquet of flowers followed by wreaths in remembrance of the fallen. Children from Seend Playgroup and Seend School waved flags and girls presented a posy of flowers to HRH.

We were pleased to be awarded the Stillwell Cup for the most efficient small branch in Wiltshire, the second time we have received this trophy in the last five years.

Our membership totals 71 at present and we are always looking to recruit members - it is not a requirement to have had previous military service.

Robin D Heatley  
Chairman  
9 May 2022