



## The Royal British Legion Seend Branch Report for the

### Annual Parish Meeting – 7 May 2024

I'm Steve Cubberley, Chairman of Seend Branch of The Royal British Legion, having taken over from Robin Heatley.

Our year commenced when our Standard Bearer, who is also the Wiltshire County Standard Bearer was chosen as one of the 100 Standard Bearers to parade at the King's Coronation on May 6th. He had the honour to have been one of only a few who were on parade at both the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of King Charles III.

On June 25th, after 4 years absence due to Covid, we held our Annual Drumhead Service on The Lye Field. As only 7 people attended, we have reluctantly taken the decision to cancel this Service in future; members may attend in Devizes or Trowbridge.

Our main source of income, other than the annual Poppy Appeal, derives from our Annual Lecture in the Spring followed by a Social Evening in the Autumn. Last year, a full house at the Community Centre were entertained by The Pop Pickers Band from Fareham, Hampshire.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup> our Membership Secretary, Wayne Cherry was interviewed by Wiltshire Radio during his annual vigil, standing for 100 hours at the top of The Brittox in Devizes. He has done this for the past 7 years collecting over £25,000.00 for the Branch Annual Poppy Appeal. We also placed lamp post poppies on 9 lamp posts in Seend High Street and Sells Green which were sponsored by local businesses and individuals. A total of 22 poppies were also placed on lamp posts in Bishops Cannings, Coate, and Appleshaw near Ludgershall raising a total of £945.00. Our total collection for 2023 was £10285.00. My thanks to all our poppy collectors for their continued help and support, some of whom were presented with long service badges and certificates at our April meeting.

Kevin Toft and Gavin Perry continued their fundraising by taking part in the 11,000 steps a day throughout November during which time Gavin laid a Seend Branch wreath on the Thiepval Memorial in France.

On Remembrance Sunday we paraded at the village war memorial where we were joined by representatives from the Parish Council, the WI, the school, the Scouts and Bowerhill Beavers and wreaths were laid to honour and remember the fallen from both World Wars.

At our Annual County Conference in January, we were rewarded with presentation of the Stillwell Cup for the most efficient small branch in Wiltshire; the 6<sup>th</sup> year in a row that we have received this honour. We also won the Colonel Tempest Cup for the highest percentage increase in Poppy Appeal Collection over the past three years. Our then Chairman Robin Heatley and Membership Secretary, Wayne Cherry were each awarded the Royal British Legion Gold Badge for outstanding service.

Our Annual Lecture took place on April 13th. Before another full house, Matthew Middleditch MBE QGM, head of SO15 Counter-Terrorism Command in the Metropolitan Police gave a most interesting talk entitled 'My Life as a Counter-Terrorism Bomb Disposal Operator', describing his encounters in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. From the proceeds, our Branch donated £600.00 to The Felix Fund, the charity for injured bomb disposal operators.

I have instituted an informal monthly get together of RBL members on the third Friday of every month at 6.30pm in the Community Centre. Our branch membership now numbers 69 and we always welcome new recruits – it is not necessary to have had previous military service.

I am determined that we members of Seend Branch must and will always carry out our small part in helping to safeguard the welfare, interests and memory of those who serve and have served in our Armed Forces.

Steve Cubberley - Chairman  
RBL Seend Branch  
7 May 2024