



The Royal British Legion Seend Branch Report for the

Annual Parish Meeting – May 2025

In early May last, Kevin Toft and Gavin Perry installed the Silhouette Soldier adjacent to the War Memorial at Seend Parish Church. In May we also arranged for the War Memorial to be professionally cleaned; this was jointly funded by Seend Branch and the Parish Council.

In June last year we remembered D-Day, it being the 80th anniversary of the historic event. On 5th June Kevin Toft laid a wreath at St Mary's Church and the Airman's Memorial in Bishops Canning. On 6th June, the D-Day 80 flag was raised at the Church tower in the morning and a Beacon was lit in the evening, at the Community Centre. At the Beacon lighting I read out the International Tribute to commemorate the men and women who sacrificed their lives to liberate Europe. To coincide with the raising of the D-Day 80 flag, the Silhouette Soldier memorial was dedicated by the Vicar. In addition, as part of the D-Day celebrations we held a 1940's style concert in the Community Centre, with a stunning performance by the Polka Dot Peaches.

A big thank you also, to Wayne Cherry who, at this time, raised £1100 for Help the Heroes and £95 through the sale of RBL D-Day 80 badges.

In recognition of the Normandy campaign, the Seend Branch made a donation of £800 to the Spirit of Normandy Trust – a registered charity focussed on the welfare of Normandy veterans.

In August, our star fund-raisers, Kevin and Gavin, completed a cycle tour of the Normandy beaches. They cycled over 100 miles and raised £2,886 for the RBL.

In September our social calendar started with "Pop Pickers" - a brilliantly organized party in the Community Centre, unfortunately attended by only 65 guests, but with lots of music and dancing. Thanks to all those that helped organize this great event – we did at least turn a profit of £276. Coming up this year, in September, we have arranged for a Bee Gees tribute night – hopefully we can make this a sell-out.

In October, the County Standard Bearers Competition was held in Wilton. For the 7th consecutive year Kevin was a winner.

The end of October and into November brought a very busy period - the annual Poppy Appeal and Ceremonial Remembrance activities. Armistice and Remembrance Day Services were well-attended. Also, a big thank you to our President and his wife, Patrick and Christine O'Reilly, for their excellent hospitality after the Remembrance Day service.

Early November also saw even more fund-raising on the part of Kevin and Gavin – an additional £120 through the RBL Facebook Walk, of a combined 121 miles.

On the subject of fundraising, one of the initiatives introduced by our Branch was the use of QR codes to make it easier to donate to the RBL. It transpires that nationally, during last November's Poppy Appeal, Seend Branch was 15th overall, having raised £1,457 via the QR code and on a par with major branches, such as Manchester. This amount was in addition to the £10,000+ raised through our traditional collections.

In January we attended the RBL Wiltshire County Conference, during which we received the following awards:

- Winners of the Tempest Cub
- Runners up for the Heavyside and Stillwell Cups
- Winners of the County Standard Bearers Competition
- County certificate to Gavin Perry
- RBL Gold Badge to Kevin Toft

In April this year I attended the ANZAC Dawn Service at Codford St Mary and laid a wreath on behalf of Seend Branch, and Gavin Perry attended the Exercise Tiger Anniversary Memorial on 27th.

On 8th May this year it was the 80th anniversary of VE day. We started the day of with a Flag raising and a short memorial service at the War Memorial. In the afternoon I presented a Memory Board to the school, capturing and sharing precious memories of some of our older residents, of their experiences during the War and on VE day. In the evening the RBL ran a BBQ in the Community Centre Garden and provided free entertainment from a local band, @59. The evening was topped off with the ever-popular Beacon Lighting, as part of a nationwide celebration.

We had hoped to organise a VE Day Street Party for the village children but sadly had to cancel this due to lack of support. However, I would like to thank the Seend WI for their kind offer of tea and cakes, had the event gone ahead.

We are a small branch, with only 68 members, but I am determined that 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. To do this we need more members, particularly from the younger generation; membership is £20 per year and we would welcome anyone who wishes to join.

Steve Cubberley - Chairman
RBL Seend Branch
12 May 2025