



Fressingfield & District Branch, The Royal British Legion

Annual Report to the Parish Council 23/24

The last 12 months has run along similar lines for the branch, with fund-raising, events including the Coronation, and CarBoot/Garage Trail, Remembrance and more.

Firstly an update on our donation in 2023 to the RBL Care Home Halsey House in Cromer. The picture shows the xylophones outside in the garden of the Dementia Danbury Wing; a really worthwhile use of the funds donated by the branch. Sadly we were unable to make the opening ceremony in late April.



The Coronation party on the Playing fields in early May was the first event of the summer, where we again had some commemorative mugs produced, most of which were sold on the day. We'll probably give mugs a miss now for a bit although we ran a successful raffle on the day too. Our summer event of the Car Boot and Garage Trail raised further funds, and we combined it with a Bring and Buy sale on our stall, where we sold a number of unwanted items brought in from individuals – as the saying goes: “one person’s trash is another’s treasure”.

We also took delivery of our new branded items: gazebo, table cloths and banners now adorn our stand wherever we go – signposting any interested parties (veterans and non-veterans alike) where they can join their local RBL branch, and continue the support for veterans and their families.

The Poppy Appeal is the British Legion's national fund-raising campaign, in which we are of course involved. In 2023, our local Poppy Appeal Organiser Johnny Scott-Barber (co-ordinated at County level) and the many local volunteers who collect from the wider district again did a magnificent job in collecting nearly £5,000. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and then attended the various Remembrance services in Fressingfield and other local parishes.

In October we had a fascinating talk from Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner, who outlined his role as the PCC, and the various links to other organisations. Tim Passmore does many talks around the county and it was great to get him to our Social event. It's well worth attending one of his talks if you can.

We have also become formally affiliated to the 1st Fressingfield Scout Group. We really hope to be able to provide mutual benefit both ways. With one of their number now being our Standard Bearer, we thought it was a fitting way to formally recognise our link and many shared values. The Explorers will be giving a presentation at our April Social Event (Thu 18th) which we hope many will be interested to attend.

Finally in March we were pleased to a part of the Lancaster commemorations at Syleham. On 19th March 1944 a damaged Lancaster bomber returning from a raid over Frankfurt crashed in a field in Syleham, sadly killing all 8 crew members on board. A new plaque now adorns the outside of the Wingfield and Syleham village Hall, where we had our branch Standard (along with Diss, Stradbroke and the Diss Royal Air Force Association (RAFA)) and the stand set up in the hall. A really memorable day of reflection and meeting some fascinating people and family descendants of those who sadly gave their lives that morning in 1944. Our branch's 'District' boundary might now have been expanded by a parish up to the Norfolk border. We hope to increase our branch membership numbers, and our fund-raising so we can again make suitable donations to just causes in the future.

“Service not self”

10/4/24