



RBL Branch Report for Annual Parish Meeting 20th April 2021

The Branch has not been completely inactive over the last 12 months, but certainly activities have been curtailed.

Perhaps Remembrance and the Poppy Appeal might be viewed by some as the main activities the RBL gets involved in, but it is of course more than that. But it is true we have had no get-togethers in the Sports and Social Club since March 2020, and only one committee meeting, held, socially distanced in the Metfield Village Hall 6 months or so ago. Alas our normal activities of monthly Branch meetings, coupled with the special events of the VE Day planned celebration day in May, a summer event at the Sancroft Hall, our Annual Dinner and a Christmas Draw could not take place as usual.

However, the Poppy Appeal was definitely not cancelled, and the Branch raised over £2,500 through donations from the Church/Chapel, schools, restaurants and pubs, businesses and private donations, for which all are thanked. The takings were understandably down on the previous year, so we hope for a bumper collection in 2021! Thank you to all who donated.

Remembrance of course had been planned, re-planned, un-planned and then finally modified to comply with the COVID rules at the time. It is important to remember that we did commemorate those who gave their lives over the decades, but we could not do so centrally in Fressingfield for the five villages. Each had their own small ceremony by their memorials, with no singing, marching or other gatherings. People could come to pay their own respects, but the various mixed messages in the press meant a lot stayed at home, and perhaps had their own minute of silent contemplation.

But we did light up, if not the village, then at least a part of it with the splendid Christmas tree arranged by the Branch, raised and decorated by some of our Members in early December. It was a lovely display, and although it was a rare outing, we could all see it when we passed, and it did bring a smile to faces, albeit invisible under our masks!

Even a planned National Tea-Party get-together in May 2021 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the RBL was postponed, but there are early plans to have a suitable gathering in late September. We plan to discuss this and ongoing activities at meetings we can finally have over early summer.

I'll end with a plea for Parishioners to consider joining the Fressingfield and District Branch of the RBL, which has recently been nationally re-branded (at some expense). Its £17 annual subscription is a mere drop in the ocean on your annual expenses, you do **not** have to have served in the Forces to become a member, and all will be welcome at our monthly meeting in the Sports and Social Club. We, like most, will hope for a busier 2021.

Lt Col (Retd) Jeremy Troughton
Secretary Fressingfield and District RBL