

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WWII

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

SATURDAY 1ST NOVEMBER 2025



WITH
WEST MALLING COMMUNITY CHOIR
BROMPTON & INVICTA MILITARY WIVES CHOIR
THE STANDARDS OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
AND
THE PIPES OF 1ST BATTALION,
THE ROYAL GURKHA RIFLES

IN AID OF..



GENEROUSLY
SUPPORTED BY..





WE
WILL
REMEMBER
THEM

Welcome

WE WISH YOU THE WARMEST WELCOME to Rochester Cathedral for this, the second Rochester Festival of Remembrance.

With the focus last year on the 80th anniversary of the momentous events of 1944, particularly D-Day, in 2025 we must look to both 80th and 85th anniversaries.

For what happened 85 years ago in the dark days of 1940, including the extraordinary rescue of so many of our soldiers at Dunkirk, and the improbable allied victory in the Battle of Britain, held back what had seemed the relentless and inexorable tide of Blitzkrieg – the German strategy of “lightening war”. Together the reconstitution of the rescued nucleus of the Army and Hitler’s grudging acknowledgement that without air supremacy any invasion of the British mainland was impossible, formed the foundation of the ultimate defeat of both Germany and Japan in 1945.

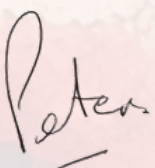
We will hear personal reflections on Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain while the experiences of the whole war will be presented through the music of that era. The dreadful ordeal of the campaigns in the “Far East” will be recalled by haunting melodies including a lament played by Pipers of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

It is a pleasure to see the shared vision of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Mike Smith, the Musical Director of the Eynsford Concert Band, and Cllr. Trudy Dean, a singer in the West Malling Community Choir, driving the production of a second Festival of Remembrance in this wonderful, inspirational, ancient building.

Even as we focus on the events of 85 and 80 years ago, we must never neglect those who have given their lives in both World Wars and in all the conflicts of more recent times. We acknowledge those who were wounded and disabled and all who were captured by the enemy. We have in mind our Armed Forces veterans, Regular and Reserve, all of whom were willing to make those sacrifices for the preservation of our freedom. We think of their families and all those they left behind. We recognise the courage and commitment of our police, fire, ambulance and health services and the importance and vital role of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy in every modern conflict. And finally, the civilians, who bear the brunt of every war.

We must remember the allies with whom we shared the victories in 1945 including the USSR and USA and those from what was then the Empire. In the cold war and subsequent conflicts with our NATO and commonwealth partners, and at this critical period in history for our Ukrainian friends – not only their Armed Forces but the entire nation who are giving their lives to protect the values, ways of life and democracies we so easily take for granted in the West.

This will be an evening for both enjoyment and reflection. As you think of those we are commemorating and celebrating please think of the debt we owe them. Their legacy is our freedom, and our duty is to continue to strive to preserve that freedom, that legacy. To every one of them we owe our gratitude. For our tomorrow, they gave their today.



Brigadier (Retired) Peter Gilbert QVRM TD DL VR

Kent County President Royal British Legion and Link Deputy Lieutenant for Medway

Shaping your **financial future** today



We are proud to support the **Festival of Remembrance** — a time to reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who gave so much.

Becketts is an independent firm of Chartered Financial Planners, established in 1988, and a Certified B Corporation. We provide financial advice and investment guidance to individuals, families and businesses across the UK, helping them make the right decisions about their future.

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For all of us at Becketts, supporting this year's Festival of Remembrance is a great honour. It is a moment for reflection and gratitude, when we come together as a community to remember those who gave so much and to ensure their service is never forgotten.

This year is especially significant. We mark eighty years since the end of the Second World War and with it the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) and Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day). These milestones remind us of extraordinary courage and unity. The freedoms we enjoy today were secured through sacrifice, and it is our duty to honour those who made it possible.

The Festival provides a powerful opportunity to reflect on these values – duty, integrity and care for one another – qualities that continue to inspire us at Becketts. As a Certified B Corporation, we are committed to acting with responsibility and long-term purpose, ensuring that our decisions benefit not only our clients, but our wider community. Supporting this event is one way we can express that commitment.

We are grateful to the organisers, performers, and everyone who has brought this Festival together. Their dedication makes this evening both moving and memorable. It is also heartening that the proceeds will support charities working with veterans and their families, turning remembrance into meaningful action.

On behalf of everyone at Becketts, thank you for joining us. May tonight's music, stories and silence remind us that peace is precious, and that remembrance is not only about the past but also about the responsibility we all share for the future.

With respect and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Ian White".

Ian White

EXECUTIVE CHAIR

Beckett Investment Management Group



A Year of Anniversaries

2025 marks the 85th anniversary of the two episodes in 1940 that shaped the outcome of World War 2, and the county of Kent played a huge part in both. It is also the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe, Victory over Japan and the true end of the war on 2nd September 1945.

The miracle of Dunkirk, officially known as Operation Dynamo took place between 26th May and 4th June 1940. 338,000 allied soldiers were rescued from certain death or capture by the most extraordinary fleet of tiny vessels from the beaches of northern France. To give this figure context, the British Army today, including Volunteer Reserves, numbers some 108 000. Exhausted and hungry they arrived in Kent ports such as Ramsgate and Dover to a fantastic welcome, characterised by mugs of steaming hot tea but undoubtedly including some beer. Kent vessels played a vital role, not least our very own **Medway Queen** which will be represented during this evening's ceremony. Of the fighting leading up to the evacuation, Prime Minister Churchill said, "The whole root and core and brain of the British armies of later years seemed due to perish upon the field." And of the situation of Britain after Dunkirk, "I have myself full confidence that if all do their duty and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home, ride out the storms of war, outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary, for years, if necessary, alone".



From 10th July to 31st October 1940, the Royal Air Force fought and won the Battle of Britain. As for so much of British history, Kent stood truly on the front line. At least 10 major RAF airfields were in the current or historical County and several temporary "advanced landing grounds". There was the frequent spectacle of iconic Spitfires or (in truth, far more common) Hurricanes winning dog fights in the Kent sky with Messerschmitt or Focke-Wulf fighters of the previously infallible and invincible Luftwaffe. In perhaps the single most memorable and quoted line of all his wartime speeches Churchill declared that "never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few".



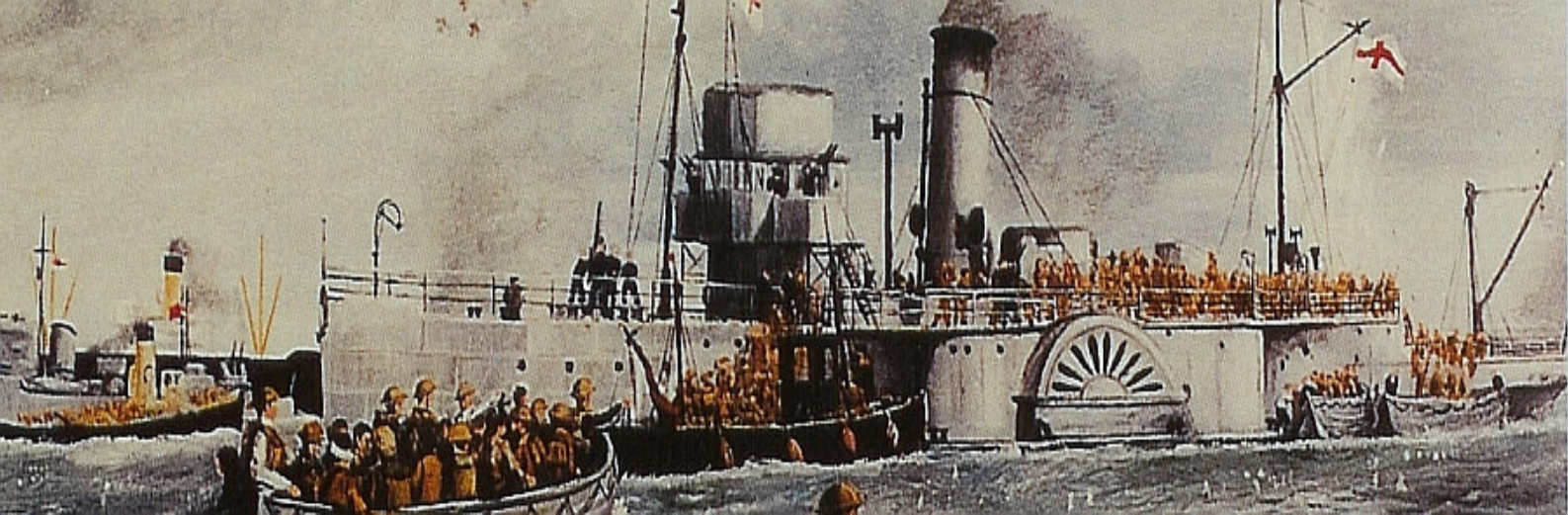
The last year of the war in Europe saw a resurgent Red Army racing westwards for Berlin, while formations from Britain and the Empire, the USA and of the invaded countries including Poland and France made steady progress Northwards through Italy and Eastwards from Normandy. The UK and US strategic bomber campaign shattered German industry, and broke military and civilian morale. Despite setbacks and counter-attacks on all fronts the German defences were increasingly compromised so that as the Red Army entered Berlin and the Western allies punched over the Rhine and met their Soviet colleagues on the Elbe, Hitler took his own life and his remaining High Command formally surrendered unconditionally on 7 May 1945. This, despite the discovery of crimes against humanity and genocide with the liberation of the concentration camps, led to the huge outpouring of relief and celebration the following day, declared VE, Victory in Europe Day.



But even as Europe celebrated, the war in the Far East was raging and reaching its culmination with the real and truly horrifying prospect of an enormous sea-borne invasion of Japan. As Islands were liberated, the appalling extent of Japanese ill-treatment of Prisoners of War and of the indigenous peoples of their short-lived empire was progressively revealed. There can be little doubt that the world's first and only deployment of nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with consequences too horrific for the imagination, was a decisive factor in the Emperor's decision to announce Japan's unconditional surrender on 15 August 1945. Despite the allied declaration of that day as Victory over Japan (VJ) Day and celebrations in the theatre of war and at home, the war went on, especially for those POWs yet to be liberated. Indeed, on 27 August 1945, twelve prisoners including three doctors - one from the Royal Army Medical Corps and the others from the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps - were executed by their guards in Borneo.



It was not until 2 September 1945, with the formal surrender of Japan signed aboard USS Missouri that World War 2 had truly ended.



Medway Queen - Heroine of Dunkirk

On 27th May 1940, HMS Medway Queen received orders to head to the beaches of Dunkirk to embark some troops that would be waiting there. The crew of HMS Medway Queen had no idea of the enormous operation, known as "Operation Dynamo", that was building up. After taking on additional stores, Medway Queen departed for Dunkirk along with the HMS Sandown, HMS Thames Queen, HMS Gracie Fields, HMS Queen of Thanet, HMS Princess Elizabeth, HMS Laguna Belle and HMS Brighton Belle.

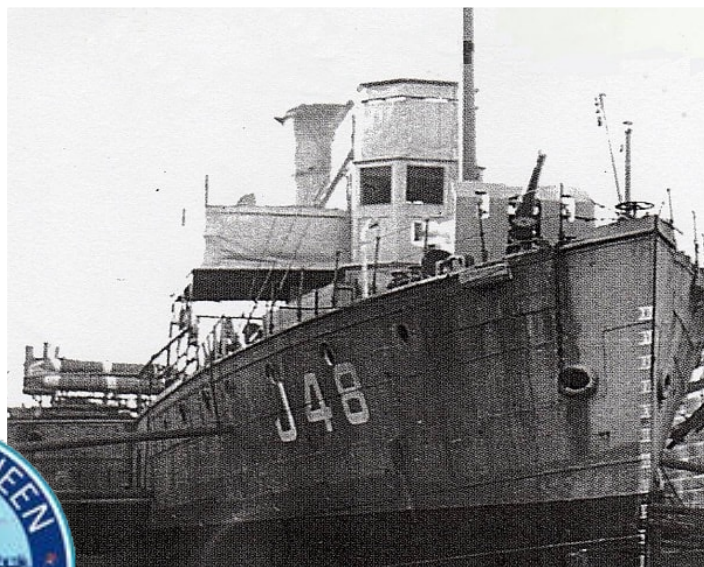
As they approached the beaches at La Panne they could see the lines of soldiers in the water, some of whom were up to their necks. Using the lifeboats, the crew of the Medway Queen ferried the soldiers from the beach to the paddle steamer and all the while this was happening the Anti-aircraft cruiser HMS Calcutta gave covering fire. Fully loaded, Medway Queen headed back to Dover unscathed. As they approached the Goodwin Sands an air-raid developed, and the little paddle steamer claimed her first kill in shooting down one of the enemy aircraft. But while all those on board celebrated, the near-by Brighton Belle tore out her bottom as she drifted over a submerged wreck. As she began to sink, the Medway Queen went alongside and took off all her soldiers and crew resulting in no loss of life. The Medway Queen, so heavily overloaded, managed to get into Ramsgate and moored alongside. This was the first of seven crossings that the Medway Queen was to make over the course of Operation Dynamo.

That evening, the Medway Queen headed back to the Dunkirk beaches. The ships now operated independently in order to maximise the number of soldiers that could be picked up. During the second night the Straits of Dover were particularly calm and the double wake from the paddle steamers were easily spotted from enemy aircraft. To prevent detection, the Medway Queen's crew devised a system of oily bags lowered over the side to break up the waves. This time Medway Queen sailed to Dunkirk Harbour and berthed alongside the East Mole, a concrete breakwater reaching out into the Channel. The harbour was extensively damaged, but use of the mole sped up loading and about two thirds of the soldiers saved throughout the 9 days of the evacuation embarked from the mole. Medway Queen made crossings to the mole or beaches as circumstances required. On most trips she disembarked her troops at Ramsgate but used Margate on May 30th. On the morning of 3rd June, Medway Queen landed the troops at Ramsgate and then moved to Dover. During the day, between trips, the crew had to clean the ship, take on ammunition and provisions and refuel before departing again. It was her 1938 conversion to oil firing that made her seven round trips possible.

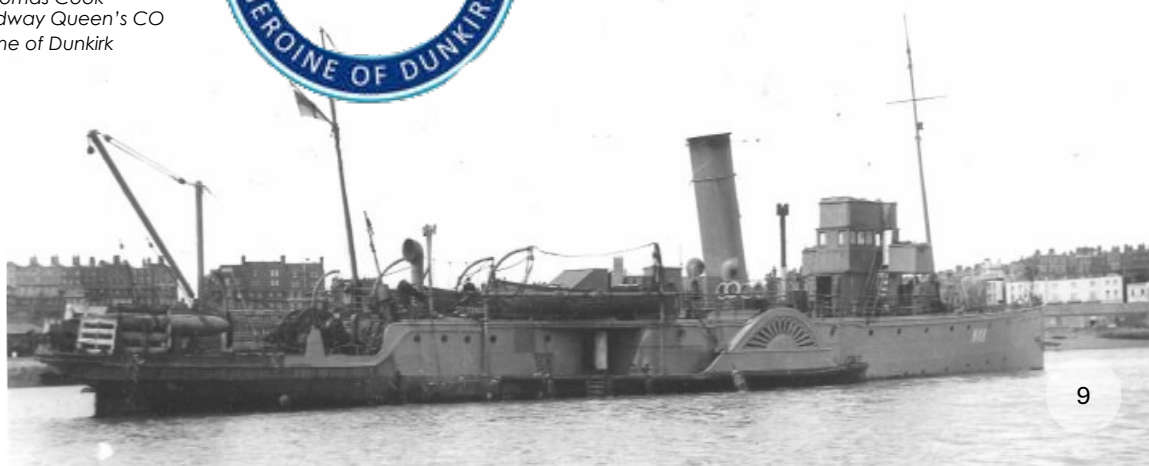
On the open decks of the Medway Queen, her 12-pounder and Lewis guns were in constant use, defending the ship and those on board with additional fire power being provided by the ever-willing soldiers and their rifles. Other soldiers also helped load the Bren guns which had been recovered from the beaches. The Petty Officer's mess was used as sick bay; the galley was a hub of food production with a big pot of stew and never-ending line of soldiers with their mess tins. It was said that every man who boarded the Medway Queen was fed and given a cup of Navy cocoa or tea. For seven crossings chief cook Thomas Russell and his assistant worked continuously with very little sleep. The chief engineer, who was also one of the Medway Queen's peacetime officers, had the enormous strain of having to control the vessels engines throughout this time. He had to act quickly to every command given mainly because of the high risk of collision with other vessels sailing closely together.

By Monday 3rd June the German army was finally closing in and Vice Admiral Ramsey gave orders that all ships were to leave Dunkirk by 2.30am the following morning. The Medway Queen was alongside the mole at midnight loading French soldiers of the rearguard before her final return crossing to England. Heavy shelling in the area caused a ship astern of the Medway Queen to be hit and she subsequently moved forward against the Medway Queen's starboard paddle box causing extensive damage. The captain had a difficult time manoeuvring her clear of the berth, but he managed it and the Medway Queen slowly returned to England.

She had been one of the first vessels to reach the beaches and she was one of the last to leave Dunkirk on 4th June 1940. She limped home and was congratulated by a signal from Vice Admiral Ramsey: "Well Done Medway Queen".



Alfred Thomas Cook
HMS Medway Queen's CO
at the time of Dunkirk



Air Marshall Chris Nickols CB CBE DL



Chris Nickols was born and brought up in Canterbury. After studying Engineering at Cambridge University, he joined the Royal Air Force as a pilot. His career started on Jaguar aircraft in Germany throughout the 1980s, at the height of the Cold War period. Since that time, he has commanded at many levels, including a Tornado Squadron and RAF Lossiemouth, at the time the largest RAF base with over 70 aircraft stationed there.

His RAF career was primarily in operations, and he was heavily involved in most of the major conflicts of the 20 years following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, including the Balkans, Iraq,

Afghanistan and Libya, with a period as a senior commander of combined air operations with US forces in the Middle East. He spent 3 years as Assistant Chief of Defence Staff for operations, planning and advising Ministers on UK armed forces capabilities and options and managing the Ministry of Defence's crisis response centre.

His long involvement with intelligence, starting as a Jaguar tactical reconnaissance pilot, led to his final appointment as Chief of Defence Intelligence with wide responsibility for military intelligence across the Armed Forces and the UK's intelligence relationship with partner nations, especially the USA and '5-Eyes' nations.

On retirement from active service, he spent a number of years as the CEO of the RAF Benevolent Fund, the primary charity supporting RAF veterans and their dependants in need, as well as those still serving. This role gave him an almost unique insight into the long-term impact of military service, as the charity was still helping a significant number of WW2 veterans and widows at that stage, as well as many from more recent conflicts.

Chris now spends much of his time with young people, mainly through work in the education sector, but also as President of the Kent Wing of the Air Cadets.

The Very Reverend Dr Philip Hesketh AKC DL

Philip, Dean of Rochester, spent his childhood in Liverpool and the Isle of Man and studied Divinity at King's College, London.

Before ordination, he worked with the homeless in South London and trained as a counsellor.

Ordained in 1994, he served his title in the Diocese of Canterbury and became Vicar of St. Stephen's, Chatham in the Rochester Diocese in 1998.

Appointed to Rochester Cathedral as Canon Pastor in 2005, Philip had a special responsibility for heritage and interpretation. He was appointed Dean in June 2016.

Philip is Chair of the Cathedral Archives, Libraries and Collections Association and a Trustee of the Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical School, Rochester. He has close links with Chennai in South India and enjoys music, gardening, and garden history.

He is a Kent Ambassador and was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Kent in 2019.



Councillor Vince Maple

Cllr. Vince Maple was delighted to be asked to compère this evening's Festival of Remembrance.

Vince is currently the Labour & Co-operative Leader of Medway Council following the historic election results in May 2023. Vince was first elected to represent Chatham Central ward in 2007.

As well as his Medway Council role, Vince currently serves as Chair of the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Partnership and is the Chair of the National Association of Labour Councillors.

Prior to his local government service, Vince worked for the GMB Trade Union as well as serving in both the Department of Work and Pensions and the Home Office.

Vince has responsibility for the Armed Forces Covenant in Medway, something he has a personal interest in as he moved to Medway very early in his life when his father was serving in the Royal Navy.

When not carrying out his local government duties, Vince enjoys live music (another reason he is delighted to be here tonight), partaking in karaoke evenings, or the most special time just at home with his civil partner Mary and son Ned.

Vince recognises the huge team effort required to make a night like tonight such a success and congratulates all those involved.



Mark Bathurst



Mark Bathurst is a Director and Trustee of the Medway Queen Preservation Society and was thrilled to be asked to share his passion during tonight's commemorations.

He completed his apprenticeship in Carpentry and Joinery before joining the Fire Service in 1998. He spent over 30 years as a fulltime firefighter, mostly in the Thanet area, meeting his dear wife Pam, who worked in the Control Room in Maidstone. They married and now have four children, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Pam is now the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Mark attends a wide range of outside organisations to share "The History and Restoration of Paddle Steamer Medway

Queen". He often travels many miles, having recently visited Southampton and Gloucestershire.

He very much enjoys his association with the historic and famous Medway Queen, particularly in his role as an official Guide. In addition, he spends much of his spare time working to improve the appearance of the ship's engine, which he sees as extremely important, because it is the very heart of the vessel and a focus of every visit. This is a major task which he sees himself working on the foreseeable future.

Eynsford Concert Band

EYNSFORD CONCERT BAND is an award-winning symphonic wind ensemble that has been based in the local village of Eynsford since its formation in 1972.

Rehearsing in Eynsford Village every Tuesday evening, we comprise of 50 playing members from all over the Southeast of England, aspiring to attain the highest standards of musicianship within a social and friendly environment.

In addition to performing high quality concerts throughout the year the band tours regularly, having travelled to Malta, Austria, Belgium, Canada and Spain and has performed on cruise ships during trips to Norway, Antwerp and the Mediterranean, recently returning from a trip to the Fjords of Norway.

In 2014, the band was crowned National Concert Band Champions and in 2016 was the first band to represent the UK at the European Championships for Wind Orchestras in Utrecht.

MUSIC DIRECTOR - Mike Smith BA(Mus) LRSM

Mike took up the appointment of Music Director of Eynsford Concert Band in 2012, bringing with him a wealth of musical knowledge garnered from an extensive career in Army Music.

Keen to expand the musical opportunities for the band, Mike has helped build close, long-term affiliations with a number of other musical ensembles including the Band of the Grenadier Guards, the Imperial Band Mellieha, Malta and the Kent Youth Wind Orchestra.



Mike recently retired from the Army after 39 years of service in Army Music. During that time, his high-profile roles included Director of Music for The Band of the Grenadier Guards and The Band of The Royal Corps of Engineers and Chief Instructor at The Royal Military School of Music. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in April 2020 and his last engagement in uniform was the Coronation Parade for King Charles III in May 2023.

More details at: www.eynsfordconcertband.co.uk



Dates for your diary..

If you've enjoyed this evening's music performance by Eynsford Concert Band, you may be interested in the following planned events:

Remembrance Sunday

The Vine, Sevenoaks
10:30am, Sunday 9th November 2025

A Christmas Celebration

St. Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks
4:00pm, Sunday 7th December 2025
Tickets: Free Entry

“Festivity”

A Christmas Spectacular featuring
The Canterbury for Ukraine Ladies' Choir
The SPACE – Sevenoaks Performing Arts Centre
4:00pm, Sunday 14th December 2025
Tickets: tickets@eynsfordconcertband.co.uk

“A World of Fantasy”

An exciting programme of music for the band's spring concert
The SPACE – Sevenoaks Performing Arts Centre
7:00pm, Sunday 19th April 2026
Tickets: tickets@eynsfordconcertband.co.uk



The Eynsford Concert Band Young Musicians' Academy is designed to provide young musicians with a safe and encouraging environment within which they can build their experience of playing in a large ensemble.

Rehearsing on a Tuesday evening in Eynsford Village, the academy is open to students who are in full time education and who have achieved a minimum grade 6 or equivalent. The programme's objective is that academy “graduates” become fully fledged, long-term members of the band.

Our Young Musicians' Academy currently has vacancies for Oboe, Bassoon, French Horn and Tuba.

West Malling Community Choir

WEST MALLING COMMUNITY CHOIR is delighted to be taking part in the Kent Festival of Remembrance in Rochester Cathedral for the second time, having joined other choirs and Eynsford Concert Band for the first event last year.

West Malling Community Choir is an inclusive and very friendly group of around 90 members, bringing local people together to enjoy singing and making music. The choir rehearses every Tuesday evening at St. Thomas More RC Church in West Malling.

Celebrating its 13th birthday in February 2025, the choir's repertoire and reputation has grown significantly since the early days. West Malling Community Choir has performed joint concerts with other choirs and musicians locally in Kent and further afield, singing in France, Somerset, and Suffolk, in Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals and in London venues. In 2025 the choir performed with the Invicta Jazz Orchestra for the second time in a joint concert in March and with the Music Man Project (Kent/Medway) in July, having been included in a support choir of over 300 voices at The Royal Albert Hall for national Music Man Project concerts in 2019 and 2024.

Under the enthusiastic leadership of Kathryn Ridgeway, Music Director, and with Tania Dowd as accompanist, the choir continues to develop and improve.

Accompanist: **Tania Dowd**

More details at www.westmallingcommunitychoir.co.uk



KATHRYN RIDGEWAY graduated with a BMus (Hons) from Sheffield University where she also trained as a violinist under the Lindsay String Quartet and Martin Milner.

She pursued her playing and teaching career in the Southeast as Head of Instrumental Studies for Mid-Kent, performing with local orchestras and chamber ensembles; she later became Head of Strings at Trent College.

Her ideology of making music accessible to all resulted in the inauguration of a Residential Summer Holiday Music Course for young string players in Kent.

She has directed choral concerts in major London venues and staged musicals. Kathryn has officially retired but is busier than ever; she continues to perform regularly in the southeast, is closely involved in music in local primary schools, directs The Maidstone Singers, West Malling Community Choir and Brompton & Invicta Military Wives Choir; she also runs a singing-for-wellbeing group – Healing Voices.



Brompton & Invicta Military Wives Choir

THE BROMPTON & INVICTA MILITARY WIVES CHOIR was formed in 2013 and brings women with military connections together from all over Kent. They come together to sing, share, and support one another, forming life-changing friendships and experiencing the joy and benefits of singing. Whether you are a veteran, wife, sister, partner, or serving yourself, you are welcome to join them to make new friends, share experiences, sing, laugh, and even enjoy tea and cake.

Brompton & Invicta are part of the wider network of the MWC, which has a community of around 2,000 women in 70 choirs across the UK and internationally. The choirs come together to celebrate a love of singing and a communal understanding that comes from our members' shared experiences of the Armed Forces.

In addition to their weekly meetings at Brompton & Invicta MWC, they participate in various events throughout the year, including Armed Forces Day and Wartime Christmas at the Royal Engineers Museum. This year they were honoured to perform at the launch of Medway Women's History Month, and to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE day, where they performed with Marconi Brass band. However, there is no obligation to perform as they have also recorded and released several albums throughout the wider network, and last year members participated in the recording of the song, "November Sunday" for King Charles III, which was a real honour.

The choir is proud and feel lucky to have a lovely group of ladies who Sing, Share and Support each other through happy and difficult times, also enjoying days and nights out socially.

Brompton & Invicta Military Wives Choir meet on Monday nights from 6:45pm to 8:30pm at The Lampard Centre, Sally Port Gardens, Brompton ME7 5BU.

Directed by: **Kathryn Ridgeway**

Accompanist: **Judy Carr**

More details at: **militarywiveschoirs.org**



Standards and Standard Bearers

THE STANDARD is a constant symbolic reminder to members of the Legion's motto 'Service not self'. The Standard's colours are blue and gold. The blue indicates loyalty and fidelity, and the gold signifies service - "as gold is tried by fire" - and reminds us of all those who gave their lives for our country. In the upper left corner is the Union Flag, in which the crosses of St George, St Andrew and St Patrick symbolise unity, chivalry and our loyalty to our Sovereign, community and nation. The branch name appears below The Royal British Legion name in the central gold band.

Standard bearers are amongst the most fiercely proud (and competitive) Legion members. This evening, our Standards will be directed by the Kent Parade Marshall Mr Geoff Lees.

The duties of the Standard Bearer are physically demanding, especially outside in challenging weather conditions (of any variety). Each branch appoints a Standard Bearer who can train for the competition to appoint the County Standard Bearer. County Standard Bearers compete for the Regional appointment and ultimately the National Standard Bearer is the winner of the National competition.

There are strict rules on dress and appearance, much like those experienced during military service. These include the carefully shaped beret, neatly pressed dark suit, Legion tie, medals according to entitlement and of course highly polished black leather shoes. Standard Bearers come in all shapes and sizes but the one thing they share is the sense of pride in their wish to continue to honour The Fallen.

On parade, the senior Legion Standard gives precedence only to the Union Flag. Standards are dipped when receiving a Royal Visitor, when the National Anthem is played (the Royal Salute), when foreign national anthems are played, during the sounding of Last Post (the Act of Homage) and during the Silence. During the Exhortation Standards are dipped and remain dipped until the silence is ended. Where a lone piper plays "The Lament", Standards remain at the dip throughout.

Legion Standards are dedicated before being taken into use. After their service, like regimental colours, they are usually "laid-up" in a cathedral or church or in a public place such as a regimental or local museum, a town hall or in a military establishment such as a Reserve Forces training centre.



The Pipes of 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles



THE PIPES OF 1ST BATTALION, THE ROYAL GURKHA RIFLES (1 RGR) represent a proud fusion of tradition, discipline, and musical excellence. As part of The Royal Gurkha Rifles and the wider Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, this distinguished ensemble upholds a legacy that dates back to the early days of Gurkha service in the British Army. While Gurkha regiments have long included pipers, the formal establishment of pipe bands was solidified in 1948, and 1 RGR has since carried this tradition with honour and flair.

Renowned for their stirring performances at prestigious events such as the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the ensemble joins massed pipes and drums to showcase the precision and pageantry of military music. Their reach extends far beyond the United Kingdom, supporting ceremonial duties and cultural engagements around the globe.

Each member of the Pipes and Drums Platoon is trained to the highest British Army standards, receiving advanced instruction at the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming in Edinburgh. Beyond their musical prowess, these soldiers also serve as assault pioneers—combining artistry with battlefield readiness.

Whether performing in full ceremonial regalia or training for operational roles, the Pipes and Drums of 1 RGR embody the spirit, skill, and dedication of the Gurkha soldier-musician. Their presence is not only a musical highlight but a living tribute to the enduring bond between tradition and service.



Programme

Alleluia! Laudamus Te

Procession of dignitaries

A Reed

Eynsford Concert Band

Welcome

Vince Maple

Jupiter, The Bringer of Jollity

G Holst

Eynsford Concert Band

Calling All Workers

Wartime Radio Tune

E Coates

Eynsford Concert Band

The Call

arr D Gryba

West Malling
Community Choir

You Raise Me Up

arr R Emerson

West Malling
Community Choir

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

J Rutter

West Malling
Community Choir

Poem: Alive with Poppies

With Each Sunset

T Roberts
R Saucedo

read by Steve Aitken
Eynsford Concert Band

Paddle Steamer Medway Queen, Heroine of Dunkirk

Mark Bathurst

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

C T Smith

Eynsford Concert Band

Bring Him Home

arr M Brymer

Brompton & Invicta
Military Wives Choir

Carry Me

R Gregory

Brompton & Invicta
Military Wives Choir

We Will Remember Them

J & A L'Estrange

Brompton & Invicta
Military Wives Choir

Scotland the Brave, Highland Laddie

March on and off

Traditional

The Pipes of 1 RGR

The Mist Covered Mountains

J Cameron

The Pipes of 1 RGR
Eynsford Concert Band

Highland Cathedral

M Korb

The Pipes of 1 RGR
Eynsford Concert Band

Interval

The Great Escape	arr D Burton	Eynsford Concert Band
Battle For The Skies	R Goodwin	Eynsford Concert Band
The Battle of Britain		Air Marshall Chris Nickols
A Nightingale Sang in London Town Vocalist: Sue Rivers	arr M Smith	Eynsford Concert Band
Songs that Won the War	arr M McDermott	All (words on Page 22)

MUSTER

The Standards The Royal British Legion March	T Bidgood	Eynsford Concert Band
Serving Personnel, Veterans & Cadets The Army, The Navy and The Air Force	E Lockton	Eynsford Concert Band
Jerusalem	arr R Wiffin	All (words on Page 20)

SERVICE

Exhortation		Brigadier Peter Gilbert
The Last Post		Bugler, David Walker
Flowers of the Forrest		Piper, LCpl Puspa Subba
Silence		All (2 minutes)
Rouse		Bugler, David Walker
Kohima Epitaph		Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major Pani Cochrane
Prayers & Blessing		Dean of Rochester
The National Anthem	arr B Brown	All (words on Page 21)
Pomp & Circumstance March No.4 Procession Out	E Elgar	Eynsford Concert Band Organ, Alex Scott (ECB)

The Service of Remembrance

The Service of Remembrance will be led by:

The Very Rev'd Dr Philip Hesketh AKC DL

Dean of Rochester

Assisted by

Brigadier Peter Gilbert

Kent County President Royal British Legion

Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major Pani Cochrane

Lord Lieutenant's Cadet

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Smith BA(Mus) LRSM

Music Director, Eynsford Concert Band

Hymn

Please Stand
(if you are able to do so)

Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time
walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

The Exhortation

Brigadier Peter Gilbert

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them."

All

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM."

The Kohima Epitaph

Cadet Regimental Sergeant Pani Cochrane

"When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today."

Prayers & Blessing

The National Anthem

God save our gracious King!
Long live our noble King!
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King.

Procession Out

Please Remain Standing
(if you are able to do so)

Songs That Won The War

Goodbye Dolly, I must leave you,
Tho' it breaks my heart to go.

Something tells me I am needed at the front to fight the foe.
See the boys in blue are marching and I can no longer stay.
Hark! I hear the bugle calling. Goodbye Dolly Gray.

Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile.

While you've a lucifer to light your fag,

Smile boys, that's the style.

What's the use of worrying?

It never was worthwhile.

So, pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile.

It's a long way to Tipperary; it's a long way to go.

It's a long way to Tipperary, to the sweetest girl I know!

Goodbye Piccadilly, farewell Leicester Square.

It's a long, long way to Tipperary, but my heart's right there.

There was cheese, cheese, that brings you to your knees in the stores, in the stores.

There was ham, ham, mixed up with the jam in the Quartermaster's Stores.

My eyes are dim, I cannot see, I have not brought my specs with me,

I have not brought my specs with me.

Bless 'em all, bless 'em all, the long and the short and the tall.

Bless all the sergeants and W – O ones, bless all the corp'rals and their blinkin' sons,

Cause we're saying goodbye to them all, as back to their billets they crawl.

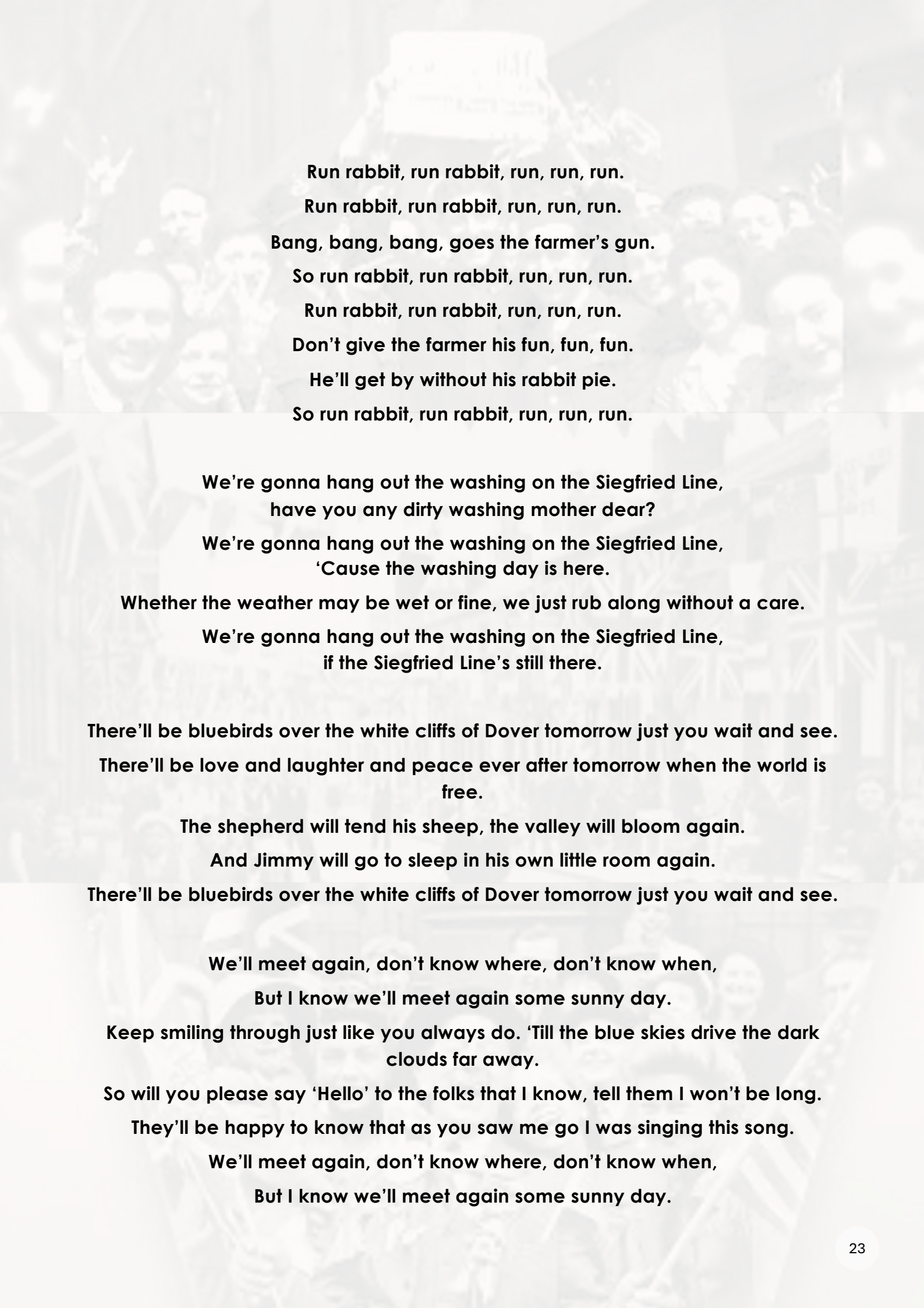
You'll get no promotion this side of the ocean so cheer up my lads, bless 'em all.

Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler, if you think we're on the run?

We are the boys who will stop your little game.

We are the boys who will make you think again.

'cause who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler, if you think old England's done? 22



Run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run.
Run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run.
Bang, bang, bang, goes the farmer's gun.
So run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run.
Run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run.
Don't give the farmer his fun, fun, fun.
He'll get by without his rabbit pie.
So run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run.

We're gonna hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line,
have you any dirty washing mother dear?
We're gonna hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line,
'Cause the washing day is here.

Whether the weather may be wet or fine, we just rub along without a care.

We're gonna hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line,
if the Siegfried Line's still there.

There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover tomorrow just you wait and see.
There'll be love and laughter and peace ever after tomorrow when the world is
free.

The shepherd will tend his sheep, the valley will bloom again.

And Jimmy will go to sleep in his own little room again.

There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover tomorrow just you wait and see.

We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when,

But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.

Keep smiling through just like you always do. 'Till the blue skies drive the dark
clouds far away.

So will you please say 'Hello' to the folks that I know, tell them I won't be long.

They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go I was singing this song.

We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when,

But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.



Become a member of the Royal British Legion and join us in standing by the Armed Forces community

Our members are vital to our success, and here are just a few examples why:

- **Kindness** – getting involved in our Branch Community Support programme as Home or Hospital Visitors and Telephone Buddies, helping to reduce social isolation and giving valuable support to those in need.
- **Camaraderie** – making friends and bringing like-minded people together in the community providing invaluable companionship.
- **Fundraising** – from local fundraising opportunities to taking part in the annual Poppy Appeal, fundraising helps us support those in need.
- **Remembrance** – attending local and national Remembrance events, helping to ensure our Armed Forces past and present are never forgotten.

**To find out more information
on how to become a member, please visit
rbl.org.uk, scan the QR code or call
our Membership Helpline on 0800 307 7773.**





The British Legion was formed on 15th May 1921, bringing together four national organisations of ex-Servicemen that had established themselves after the First World War, The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, The British National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers, The Comrades of the Great War and The Officers' Association

The amalgamation of these diverse bodies can be attributed largely to two men: Field Marshal Earl Haig and Tom Lister of The Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers. Lord Haig served as the President of The British Legion until his death.

By 1921, the tradition of a Two Minute Silence had been established. The first ever Poppy Appeal was also held that year. The poppies sold out almost immediately and raised over £106,000; a considerable amount at the time. This money was used to help WW1 veterans with employment and housing.

As a result of the war, Britain's economy plummeted and in 1921 there were two million people unemployed. Over six million men had served in the war. Of those who came back, 1.75 million had suffered some kind of disability and half of these were permanently disabled.

Then there were those who depended on those who had gone to war – the wives, children, widows and orphans, as well as the parents who had lost sons in the war, on whom they were often financially dependent.

The British Legion received their Royal Warrant from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1971 on their 50th anniversary. Today there are branches across the world – from the Falklands to Canada to Australia, Thailand and New Zealand as well as Europe with over 180,000 members.

The British Legion was established to care for those who had suffered as a result of service during the First World War, and we've been helping the Armed Forces community and their families ever since.

Today we're at the heart of a national network looking after our Armed Forces community. RBL is here to help serving and ex-serving personnel all year round, every day of the week. Our support starts after seven days of service and continues through life, long after service is over.



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

POPPY APPEAL

The Army Benevolent Fund

In the last 80 years, we have helped many hundreds of thousands of members of the Army Family, from the youngest children to the oldest veterans, both in the United Kingdom and around the world

The Army Benevolent Fund is one of the largest funders in the sector, spending around **£9m** in benevolence each year. Last year our charity supported **over 75,000 members** of the Army family in **51 countries** across the globe. In addition to assisting thousands of individuals in need on a case-by-case basis, we directly funded **86 other charities** and organisations to deliver specialist services to assist soldiers, veterans, or immediate family members.

Our support is truly for life, with individuals supported last year aged from **one day old** to **104 years old**. And we are genuinely national, with our headquarters in London and 11 regional offices covering the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

We are here to support the Army family through all of life's challenges. Our work covers six key areas, including family welfare, mental wellbeing, training and employment, independent living, housing, and elderly care. We are here for soldiers at the start of their career and our support continues long after service is over.

For Soldiers. For Life.



**SUPPORTING
FAMILIES**



**MENTAL
WELLBEING**



EMPLOYABILITY



**INDEPENDENT
LIVING**



**SUITABLE
HOUSING**




**ELDERLY
CARE**

Army Benevolent Fund

By 1944, the tide of World War Two was beginning to turn but three million British soldiers remained on active service, notably in France, Italy and Burma. The Army Board was determined that these brave servicemen and women would not face the hardships endured by those who fought in World War One, a generation earlier. In February, Winston Churchill's War Cabinet discussed the formation of the Army Benevolent Fund – a national charity for the British Army – to ensure support would be available for soldiers, veterans and their families in peacetime.

The Army Benevolent Fund was established on 15th August 1944 with HM King George VI as Patron and Field Marshal Lord Cavan as President. A £1.5m gift from the NAAFI (Navy, Army, Air Force Institute) enabled it to begin providing a lifetime of support to soldiers, former soldiers and their families.



**‘Father was
a soldier’**

There are many children still in need of a father's care, who will never see their fathers again. They died fighting for us. We can never repay the debt we owe them; but we can help to look after those they have left behind and especially to educate their children. That is one of the most important branches of the work the Army Benevolent Fund is doing to help service and ex-service men and women and their dependants. In an army of four and a quarter millions there are inevitably thousands of cases of hardship which Government schemes of relief cannot cover. The Army Benevolent Fund, by grants to Military Charities, helps to provide the financial assistance that is so sorely needed and has been so deeply deserved.

Donations payable to The Army Benevolent Fund may be sent to Field-Marshal The Earl of Cavan, 20, Grosvenor Place, S.W.1, or paid into any Bank in Great Britain or N. Ireland.

**SUPPORT THE
ARMY
BENEVOLENT
FUND**

PATRON H.M. THE KING

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

World War Two ended on 15th August 1945 – the charity's first anniversary. By the end of that year, the charity had disbursed around half a million pounds to soldiers and their families in need. In 1946, Field Marshal Montgomery, hero of El Alamein, fronted the charity's first public appeal, 'Men at Arms'.

The ABF has continued to support the soldiers and veterans of every conflict since World War Two, with special funds for those who served in Northern Ireland, the Falklands, the two Gulf Wars, Iraq and Afghanistan.

For almost 80, years it has provided lifelong support for soldiers, former soldiers and their families and will be there for as long as they are needed.

In 2010, the charity changed its name to the ABF The Soldiers' Charity but has recently opted to return to the well-established Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) title.

Army Benevolent Fund

**For Soldiers.
For Life.**



WE ARE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION INDUSTRIES

WHO WE HELP

We help Armed Forces veterans and their families in their time of need and support them to live independent lives. Since 1919 we have been providing homes and support to veterans and people with disabilities.

WHAT WE DO

Our dedicated team provides support at any stage of a veteran's life; from emergency accommodation for the most vulnerable, to employment solutions to providing family homes and nursing care.



HOME OF THE TOMMY

Many soldiers returned home from the battlefields of the First World War, only to find they were now fighting a personal battle against tuberculosis. In 1919, "Industrial Settlements" began helping many of the 55,000 soldiers who were discharged from the services with tuberculosis.

In 1920, Industrial Settlements Incorporated purchased Preston Hall which was home to 240 ex-servicemen and women and was recognised as the leading national centre of TB care. This was the start of a Village ideology where healthcare, training and employment were provided. HRH Edward Prince of Wales visited the Aylesford settlement in 1921, taking a great interest in the activities before becoming patron.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the name was changed to British Legion Industries (Preston Hall) Incorporated. In 1971, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

bestowed the Royal prefix to the Charity. New housing blocks and the present factory were built over the following three years. Her Majesty visited in 1975.

A range of accommodation was built through the 1980s and 90s including the Mountbatten Pavilion, Gavin Astor House and Prince Philip Lodge.

Although now a separate charity from the Royal British Legion – with separate finances and governance – Royal British Legion Industries shares an ethos of supporting the Armed Forces community.

The charity provides work for veterans who are employed making many of the road signs you see across the United Kingdom as well as distributing the Remembrance wreaths to branches worldwide as well as Councils, Parliament and the Royal Household.

In the early 2000's, RBLI began its 'Lifeworks' courses providing employment support to Veterans across the UK. This has now expanded to deliver courses abroad to families of serving personnel.

In 2016, RBLI re-launched its social enterprise as "Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Company" (BBMC). Today it provides employment for a team of over 100, 70% of whom are either ex-service or have a disability/health condition.

On 6th November 2019, Her Majesty The Queen officially opened the new Appleton Lodge care facility and visited our Centenary Village housing project.



SERFCA



Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association
for the South East

RESERVES ARE RECRUITING

IN THE SOUTH EAST



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UP FOR A NEW CHALLENGE?



Become a Cadet Force
Adult Volunteer with the:

Sea Cadets

Army Cadets

Royal Air Force Air Cadets
or Volunteer Cadet Corps

and take part in countless activities that are on offer
such as rock climbing, shooting, sailing and loads
more!

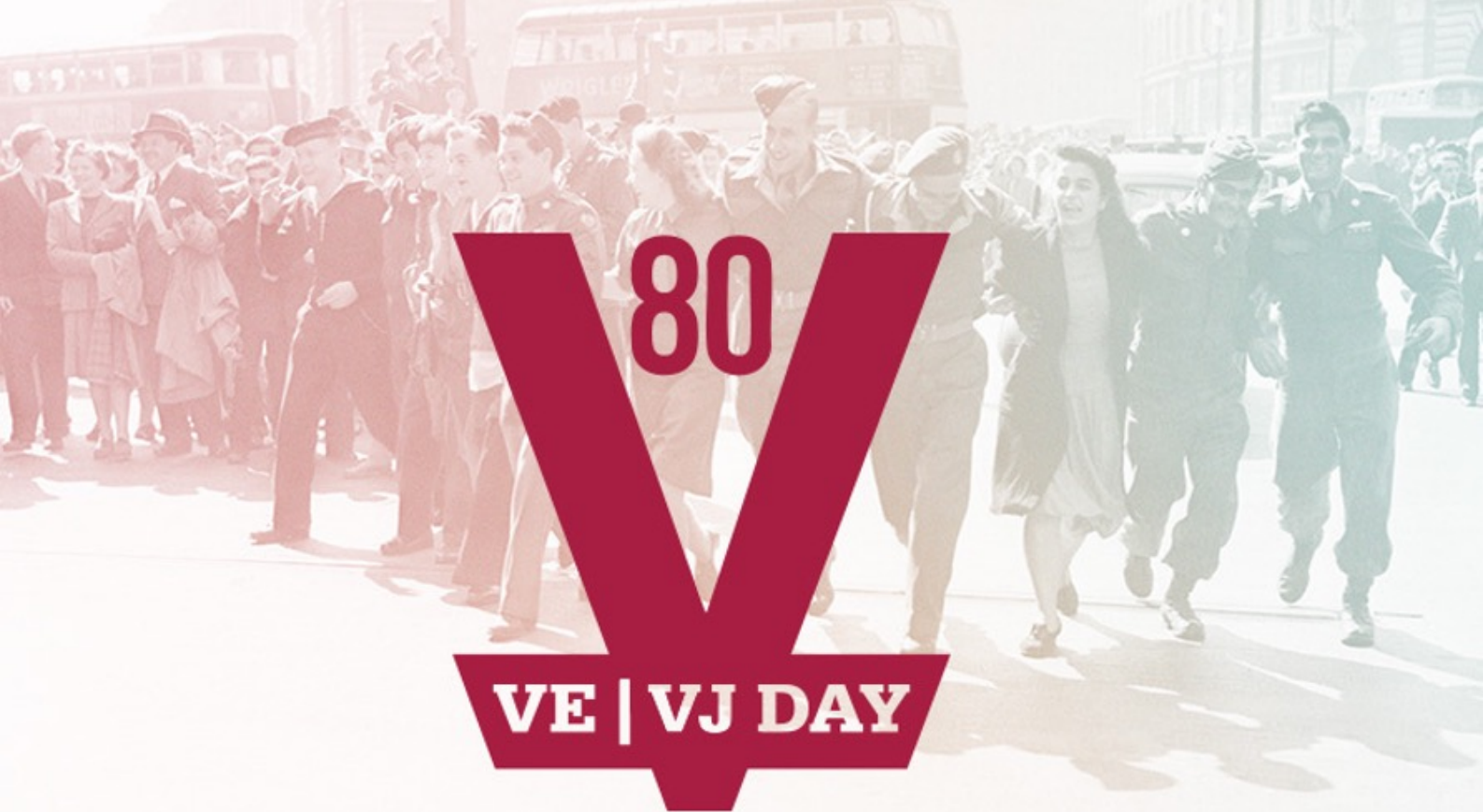
No military experience required as full
training is provided along with
opportunities for qualifications.

Scan to
find out
more



Visit adultvolunteer.org

You'll make a big difference to their lives...and to yours



Acknowledgements

Please join us in thanking the team responsible for making this evening's Festival of Remembrance possible.

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Beckett Investment Management Group
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Brian Bennett (ECB)
Lieutenant Colonel Michael Smith (ECB)
Ian Page (ECB)
Vivienne Astall (ECB)
Kathryn Ridgeway (WMCC and B&I MWC)
Colin Tolhurst (RC)
Michelle King (RC)

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Henry Desmond (RBL)
Jamie Gold
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