

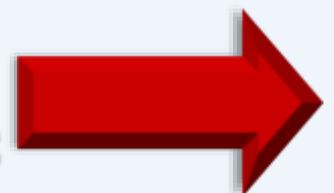
100 Years of Remembrance

Have you ever worn a paper poppy on Remembrance Day? Or taken part in a 2 minute silence?
Then you may have heard of the Royal British Legion



In summer 2021, Elmbridge Museum is putting on a new exhibition to look at the history of the Royal British Legion, remembrance, and the poppy in the local area, and we need your help!

**Find out how to get involved in
the exhibition on the next pages**



2021 is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Royal British Legion. They're a charity which supports war veterans and members of the armed forces.



The Royal British Legion (RBL) is most well-known for its 'Poppy Appeal' each year in the lead up to Remembrance Day on 11th November. This is when paper poppies are sold to raise money for the charity, and worn by people as a symbol of remembrance for those who have died in wars. It started off as a small campaign, but now the Royal British Legion distributes 40 million poppies each year!



In this pack, we've selected a handful of original items from Elmbridge Museum's archive which cover five 'themes' in the RBL's history. Some of them are over 100 years old, and they all have something to teach us about the history of remembrance.

Elmbridge Museum

About the Museum

Elmbridge Museum is based in Esher's Civic Centre, but our collection of 43,000 objects covers the history of the whole borough of Elmbridge - that includes Thames Ditton, Hinchley Wood, Molesey, Esher, Claygate, Walton, Weybridge, Hersham, Cobham and Oxshott!



The case at Dittons Library



The museum display at the Civic Centre, Esher



Research in the Museum archive!

We are an outreach museum, which means we don't have a traditional museum gallery space. Instead, we take our exhibitions and learning sessions out into the local area, and put on events at community locations such as local libraries. We have displays at Esher Civic Centre, Cobham Library, Dittons Library, Walton Library and the Xcel Leisure Centre.

Our collection of historic items is stored locally in an archive, and it's here that we preserve and store significant items which can be used for local history research and in displays.

All of the items you will see in this pack for the 100 Years of Remembrance exhibition are from our archives.

We would like you to choose **one** of the 'themes' on the following pages, take a close look at the objects and information included, and produce a piece of work to go on display in the exhibition based on those objects.

This could be anything you want it to be, for example:



A poem



A piece of writing explaining about an object's history



A drawing or piece of artwork



A short piece of creative writing (such as a letter or a story)



Make your own remembrance poppy

Your work will go up on display at Thames Ditton Library in the exhibition from the end of July, and will be seen by members of the public!

1) The Reasons for Remembrance



— Armistice Day, 1932. —

THEY died. There is no sound at all—
only silence—down the avenue of graves.

But their mute message is clamant in our ears—
“What of those who still dwell in twilight—in the ‘no man’s land’ between life and death—who live on with clouded minds and shattered nerves—

—the 6000 in Mental Hospitals
—the 32000 Nervous Wrecks?”

This is a Poppy Appeal notice with a coloured drawing of the Cenotaph war memorial in London on the front, and "Armistice Day, 1932" with a poem underneath.

Remembrance Day started in 1919, exactly a year after the end of the First World War.

The first Remembrance Day was observed by George V, the present Queen's grandfather, at Buckingham Palace.

It was then known as 'Armistice Day' as its focus was on remembering the dead of the First World War.

The observance of the 2 minute silence began from this point.



Things to think about:

What is the meaning behind the words of this poem?

Where did Armistice Day get its name from? Can you find out more about how it started and what it was for?

How did people remember the dead after the First World War?

Why was the Royal British Legion needed after the First World War?

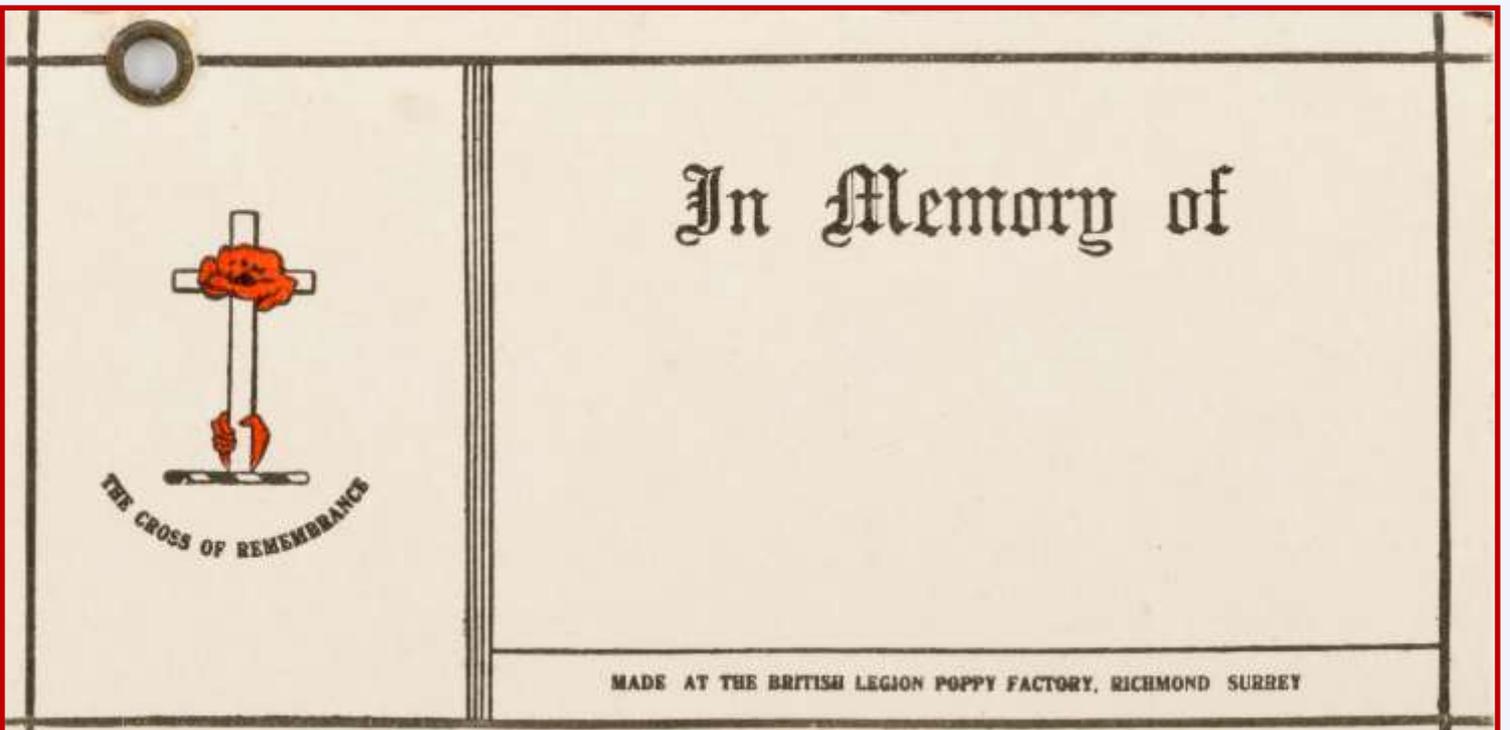


A postcard of Mount Felix, Walton, showing a Christmas party in 1917, in a hospital ward there. Mount Felix was used as a hospital for New Zealand troops during the First World War.



Ideas:

Write your own remembrance poem, or pen a letter from a soldier imagining how he might have been feeling after the end of the war.



A label for remembrance day flowers. On the left there is a poppy and cross, which says "The Cross of Remembrance". This was made at the British Legion Poppy Factory in Richmond.

2) Local Royal British Legions

The British Legion was founded in May 1921. It was a charity which merged 4 organisations founded during and just after the First World War, for the welfare of ex-servicemen and women. One of the founders was Field Marshal Earl Haig, who had been a controversial figure during the war.

The four organisations met at the Queen's Hall in London on the weekend of 14th and 15th May 1921. The agreement to merge the 4 bodies into the 'British Legion' was officially made at the Cenotaph, at the memorial to fallen soldiers of the First World War. After that, local British Legion organisations sprung up across the country to raise money for the charity and support their local ex-soldiers.

FORM 3.

Head Office :
26, ECCLESTON SQUARE,
S.W.1.

BRITISH LEGION

(Incorporated by Royal Charter, 1925).

WOMEN'S SECTION.

DEMOCRATIC. NON-SECTARIAN. NON-PARTY POLITICAL.

By wearing the

BADGE

of the Women's Section of the Legion you will show that you support a body which exists to perpetuate in civil life the principles for which our kinsmen have fought and died; to inculcate a sense of

LOYALTY

to the Crown, the Community, the State and the Nation; to promote unity among all classes; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy, and to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by devotion to mutual service.

WELCOME

will be extended to all wives, widows, mothers, sisters, daughters, and dependents of past and present members of the Naval, Military and Air Forces, to Ex-Service Women and to Members of the British Red Cross Organisation of the Empire as Ordinary Members of the Section. All others who support its policy, aims, and objects, may be enrolled as Honorary Members.

THE AIMS OF THE SECTION ARE :

- To promote the welfare** and further the interests of all members, and to take the necessary steps to see that they shall receive the grants, allowances, or pensions, for which they may be eligible.
- To educate public opinion** to the view that the welfare of the dependents of ex-service men is a national duty.
- To make representation** to Parliament and to Public Bodies of the needs of widows, children, and dependents of ex-service men.
- To perpetuate the memory** of those who died in the service of their country and to undertake the care of graves of ex-service men and women in the British Isles.
- To find employment** for members and to raise funds for the Legion and for the Women's Section.

STRENGTH

lies in unity. Join the Section to-day and help us to carry out our work for the lasting benefit of those who have made sacrifice.

This is the application form for the Women's Section of the British Legion. It gives details of the rules, and on the other side is a form which would have been filled in. The Women's Section was formed in 1921 and focussed on the welfare of widows and families of the fallen.

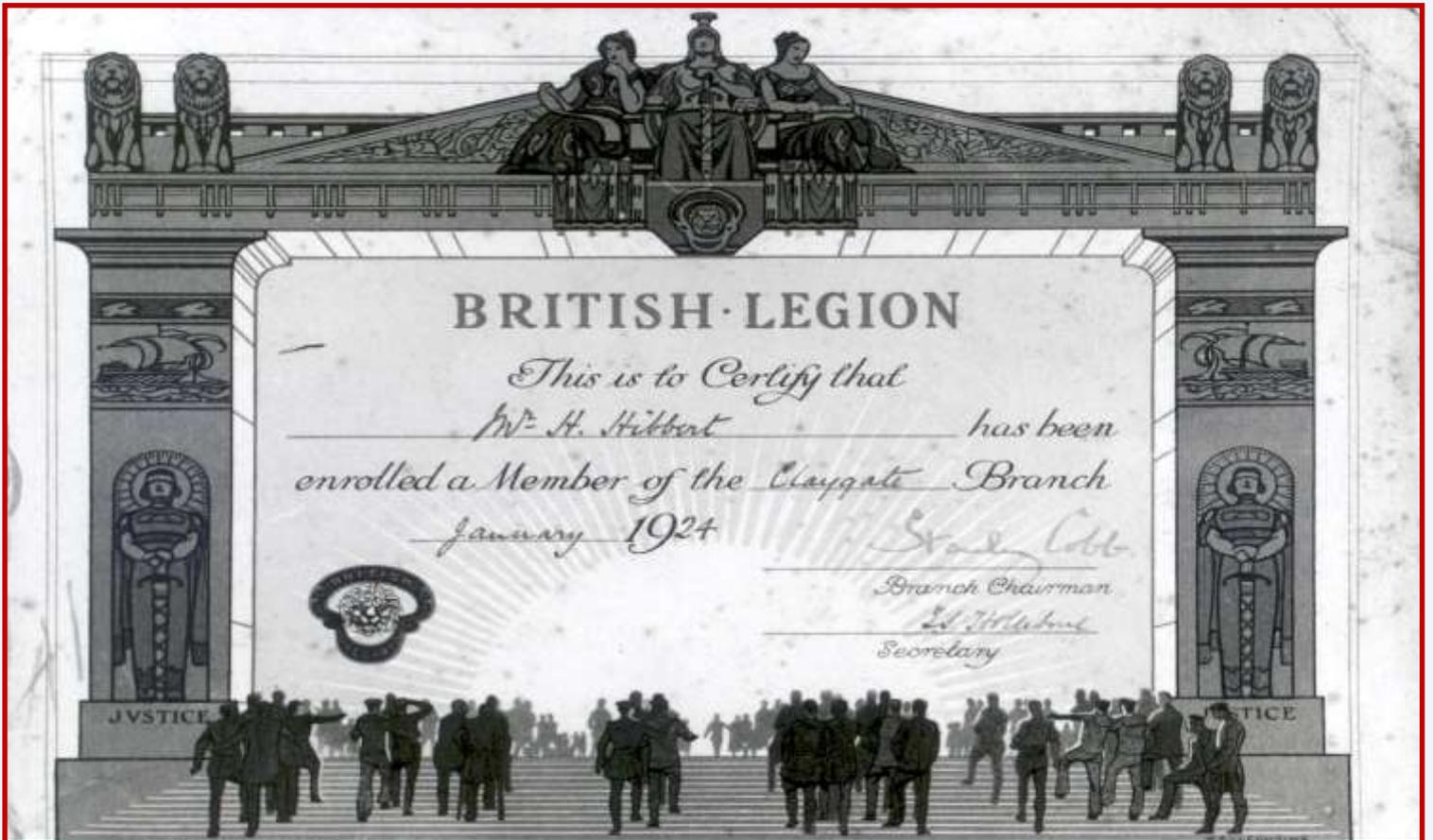
This form came with a handbook owned by Mrs. S. Howard, a well-known local fundraiser from Walton.



Things to think about:

Can you find out more about the work of the Women's Section, and what their handbook might have contained?

Read the aims of the Women's Section. Do you think they might have changed? What key aims would you add if you could?



A British Legion Certificate for Mr. H. Hibbert, as a member of the Claygate Branch, January 1924. Mr Hibbert had previously been a member of the 'Comrades of the Great War', one of the four organisations which had merged to form the British Legion in 1921.



Ideas:

Make your own RBL certificate for the present day, or redesign the logo for a modern-day membership card.



A British Legion Women's Section membership card, for Mrs S. J. Howard, issued on 10th September 1926. The logo shows a lion's head in the middle, which traditionally represents bravery, strength or royalty. The lion's head logo is still used in member badges today.

3) The Poppy

This is an embroidered Christmas card, made of red, blue, green, white and yellow silk. Its picture shows a poppy, daisies and cornflowers. On the inside it says 'I'm thinking of you'. It was sent to a Walton local in the First World War in around 1915. Poppies often grew in the battlefields of Europe.



It was on Armistice Day of November 1921 that the RBL held its first ever 'Poppy Appeal'. The poppies sold out immediately and raised £106 (£5,322 in today's money!) The money was used to help war veterans with employment and housing. The symbol of the poppy originates from the battlefields in Northern France and Belgium, where they flowered every year despite the devastation. They became a symbol of hope, and also remembrance of those who had died there.



Things to think about:

Can you find out more about Anna Guerin, the former French schoolteacher who organised the first Poppy Appeal in the UK?

This is an advertisement card for Remembrance Day, saying, "Remembrance Day, Nov. 11th, Give Generously". In the centre it shows a large red poppy. This was encouraging people to donate to the Royal British Legion by buying a poppy. The poster belonged to local RBL member Mrs. S. Howard of Walton, who was often recognised by the leaders of the RBL for her fundraising efforts.

4) Raising Money



This is a letter to Mrs. Howard from the President of the British Legion, Earl Haig, dated 6th September, 1926. The top is decorated with poppies in a field. In the letter Haig thanks Mrs Howard for selling poppies for Remembrance Day.

The British Legion had been given royal patronage from 1925, with the granting of the organisation's 'Royal Charter' by King George V. This set out specific rules as to how the Legion was to be run.

Royal support has helped the RBL to raise money over the years. On a local level, branches have also done much to raise funds through campaigns.

The British Legion officially became the 'Royal' British Legion that we know today in May 1971, 50 years since it was first founded.



Idea:

Write a plan for the activity you would do to raise money for the Poppy Appeal if you were organising it this year.

This photo shows Hersham F.C. raising money for the British Legion Poppy Appeal in November 1978. In the charity match, the male players dressed in women's clothes.



5) Local Memorials and Parades



A photo of the unveiling of the First World War Memorial on Giggs Hill Green, Thames Ditton, 1925. It bears the names of 89 people from the parish who died in the war. Remembrance Day parades are often focussed around war memorials.



Idea:

Make your own Remembrance poppy.

A photo of the Mayor, Councillor Dennis Cockshutt, at the Walton Remembrance Parade in November 1978. A poppy wreath has been laid at the war memorial.



Things to think about:

Can you find out more about what would happen in a traditional Remembrance Day service? There are some clues in these photos.

A photo of a Legion on parade at Churchfields Recreation Ground, Weybridge, in the 1940's. Two flags are balanced across a pile of drums.



The Weybridge Legion marching towards Monument Hill for a Remembrance parade in the late 1940s. They are all wearing war medals.

