

Effingham and The Bookhams Branch of The British Legion

CHRISTOPHER JOHN HOGGER

The branch of the Royal British Legion in Effingham was formed in 1925 and originally named as the 'Effingham & District' branch, but about ten years later was renamed as the 'Effingham & The Bookhams' branch. The branch and its associated club contributed very significantly for many decades to the work of the Legion and to charitable activities in Effingham.

Introduction

The British Legion had its origins in the aftermath of the First World War, from which nearly two million servicemen returned disabled in one way or another, about half of them permanently so. The injuries they had sustained made it hard to find employment. Even in cases where they were still capable of working in their former trades, their former employment positions may have ceased to exist. Compounding their difficulties was the dire state of Britain's post-war economy – the Twenties would be a decade of very high unemployment, poverty and industrial strife, leading to the National Strike in 1926. At the start of this decade there were more than 200,000 servicemen among the unemployed, one in ten of them disabled, their survival relying upon charity or meagre pensions. Obtaining a disability pension was itself a minefield for any serviceman seeking to claim one.

At the end of that War there was no single organisation tending to the needs of ex-servicemen as a whole, but some important bodies sharing that concern had come into existence during 1916-17. These were The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, The National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers and The Comrades of The Great War. In 1920 a fourth similar body was established, The Officers' Association.

The British Legion was created as an amalgamation of these four bodies and two persons are primarily credited for its founding: Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, 1st Earl Haig, who during the War had commanded the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front; and Lance Bombardier Thomas Frederick ("Tom") Lister, a Lancastrian ex-combatant from the Royal Garrison Artillery, of height 6ft 6", who had himself been wounded in 1916 and discharged at the age of about 29.

Haig is customarily envisaged these days as the key figure whose stubborn commitment to outdated military tactics was responsible for the huge losses among the young men who had been exhorted to fight for their country only to be mown down in the mud of Flanders. However, he was also giving thought during the War to the future welfare of the men afterwards. A particularly hot topic was the matter of demobilisation, with Haig wishing the staging of this to be based upon both length of service and age, such that those who had served the longest, or were of the greater age, would have priority in leaving active service. His views on this were opposed in Government circles on the grounds that Britain after the War would need rapid revitalisation in its industries and that would require bringing the youngest and fittest ex-servicemen into that sector as quickly as possible. In that case, men who were wearied from long service or were of an age where they already had families to support would have less opportunity to gain employment once demobilised. This policy created resentment and fury among many servicemen, leading in some instances to rioting. It became clear to Haig that the men needed to have one single strong body able to represent their interests and exert sufficient influence where appropriate upon Government policy making. Accordingly, he declined to support separately any of the four above-mentioned bodies, instead urging them to join together as one.



Figure 1 Sir Douglas Haig.

The other important figure was Tom Lister, whose contribution came to the fore in early 1920. By then, most of the millions of soldiers still scattered around Europe in 1919 had been brought home. Lister had become the second President of The National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers which, together with The Comrades of The Great War, convened a joint conference in the Spring of 1920. To this they invited the other two bodies, The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers and The Officers' Association. By arguments presented at this conference and in subsequent meetings through 1920 and into early 1921, Lister succeeded in persuading those bodies to amalgamate. This work culminated in the key occasion in 1921 known as the Unity Conference, staged in London at the Queen's Hall in Langham Place over the two days 14-15 May. Tabled at this event was a Draft Constitution for a new body. Through various refinements this was evolved into an agreed Constitution of the British Legion, to take immediate effect, that is, from 15 May. At 9 am that morning, to the chimes of Big Ben, representatives of the four component bodies walked down Whitehall to the Cenotaph and laid upon it a wreath bearing the badges of those bodies.



Figure 2 Tom Lister.

The object of the new Legion was simple: to care for the people who had incurred injury or other suffering as a consequence of military service in the War, assisting in particular with the financial and employment difficulties faced not only by surviving ex-servicemen but also by those who had been widowed or orphaned by the conflict.

The quiet charitable activities and campaigning carried out by the Legion are perhaps not quite as prominent in the public mind as the Legion's involvement in two particular remembrance events carried out each year, namely the Two Minute Silence and the Remembrance Day Poppy Appeal. The Silence had been instituted even before the Legion came into being, first taking place on Armistice Day 11 November 1919. The first Poppy Appeal (called the 'Haig Appeal') – the collecting of donations and the wearing of poppy badges – was made in 1921, and the associated Poppy Day was chosen to be Armistice Day in that year.

It was a huge success, raising at least £160,000, and through Haig's representations to Government in the summer of 1922 it became thereafter an annual event.

From 1921 until his death in 1928 Haig was the President of the British Legion. Its Chairman from 1921 was Tom Lister who continued in that role until 1927, in which year he was appointed CBE in the Birthday Honours List. Thereafter he remained active on the Legion's National Executive Council and was knighted for his services in the 1961 New Year Honours. He died in 1966.

On 29 May 1971, following its golden anniversary, the Legion was granted a Royal Charter and thereafter became the 'Royal British Legion'. Alongside a central office in London, and in addition to its numerous local branches in Britain and in many other countries, there is an associated network of 'Legion Halls'. The latter are not buildings, as the term might suggest, but social clubs affiliated to the RBL (but not administered by it), whose members included people who were ineligible to belong the Legion.

The beginnings of the Effingham Branch

The only detailed account we currently have of the origins of Effingham's Branch of the Legion is that written by its former Secretary, the late James ('Jim') T Clarke formerly of Speranza in Orestan Lane. His narrative, reproduced in Appendix I, was composed by him in (we believe) 2005 – the 80th anniversary of the registration of the branch – and appears in a booklet bearing the title *Effingham & The Bookhams Royal British Legion (A Brief History)*. The booklet was printed by Roxley Models, the business in Bookham established by Francis ('Frank') Lawrence Rice-Oxley, a former Branch member and ELHG member.

Clarke's history of the Branch spans the period 1919-61 but includes the curious remark 'Sadly, no records can be found until 1942', which begs the question of where his information about the earlier years came from – it could not have been from his own memory, as he had not been born until much later. Judging by the context of the remark, it may refer only to records of the branch under its new name which from 1934 encompassed The Bookhams as well as Effingham. Be that as it may, Clarke tells us that the initiative in bringing about the Branch in Effingham came from ex-serviceman 'Captain' Frederick John

Searle who had settled with his family at Effingham Junction. We will next describe Searle's background before going on to consider the activities of the Branch.

Captain Frederick John Searle

According to his entry in the 1939 National Register, Frederick was born on 2 December 1888. His birth reference is [GRO Ref: Wandsworth 1d 136, 1888 (Q1)]. His parents John (born in Taunton in 1851) and Georgina 'Sherren' (née Critchell) had married at St George's Church in Fordington, Dorset (her birthplace) on 15 October 1879. John has not been found in the 1881 Census but Georgina was visiting her parents William and Emily in Fordington. She had been born there in about early 1848 [GRO Ref: Dorchester 8 53, 1848 (Q1)]; she appears to have adopted the second forename Sherren but had not been registered with it at birth.

Frederick was baptised at St Anne's Church, Wandsworth on 3 February 1889. The family was at that time living in Summerley Street, Earlsfield and John – who had been a railway guard at the time of his marriage – was now a railway inspector. They continued living at 10, Summerley Street until at least 1911 when the Census finds John still working as a railway inspector. By then Frederick was the only child still living with John and Georgina (two other children of theirs had by now left the home and one other had died) and he was working as a clerk in a merchant's office. Electoral Registers show Frederick residing there up to 1913, occupying a furnished single room on the first floor, his parents apparently constituting a separate household in the rest of the house.

With the coming of the War, Frederick joined the Territorial Force's Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, 6th Battalion. On 8 December 1916 *The London Gazette* [Page 11977] recorded that, as a cadet, he had been made a 2nd Lieutenant. Nearly two years later he was awarded the Military Cross, this reported on 16 September 1918 in *The London Gazette (Supplement)* [Page 11012] as follows:

'2nd Lt Frederick John Searle, Yeo.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in temporary command of a company. By his fine example, courage and skill he broke up several attacks by superior enemy forces, offering the most stubborn resistance, and only withdrawing in obedience to orders when his position was practically surrounded.'

The same issue reported [Page 10903] that he been also awarded a bar to the medal, the citation stating:

'2nd Lt Frederick John Searle, M.C., Yeo., attd. Wilts. R.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. This officer was in command of a company in the front line, when about 6 am an attack was made on his front and on the battalion on his right. His company beat off the attack, but the enemy penetrated on the right. He maintained his position all day, although the defensive flank he made on the right was very weak. Throughout the ten days' operations he did most excellent work with his company.'

At the beginning of 1918 Frederick had married, at Wimbledon Parish Church on 2 January, to Annie Helen (née) Mills. Their marriage certificate [GRO Ref: Kingston 2a 995, 1918 (Q1)] describes her as aged 30, her late father Walter as a railway manager and her abode as 14, Springfield Road in Wimbledon. John is described as a 2nd Lieutenant with the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, his father John ('Jack') as a Station Master and his abode as the Parish of Horsley, Surrey. Annie had been born at Clynderwen in Pembrokeshire in 1887 and by 1911 had been living in the household of her widowed mother at 1, Purser's Cross Road in Fulham, occupied as an elementary school teacher.

After the War Frederick was customarily referred to locally, and in the newspapers, by himself (on oath) and others as 'Captain' Searle but we have been unable to find any evidence that he was ever promoted beyond 2nd Lieutenant, despite the award of the MC.

Soon after he had married, Frederick's mother Georgina died on 24 March 1918 [GRO Ref: Guildford 2a 204, 1918 (Q1)] and was buried at St Martin, East Horsley on 30 March, the burial register giving her place of abode as Station House, Effingham Junction and also noting 'There is room in the grave for one more burial'. Her age was given as '65' but she was actually about 70. Administration of her estate was granted to John on 7 December, her effects valued at nearly £162.

The first child of Frederick and Annie was Walter John, born in 1919 [GRO Ref: Dorking 2a 275, 1919 (Q3)]. Later they would produce two more sons, Eric George (in 1923) and Martin S (in 1927). The Electoral Registers for 1919-21 list Frederick and Annie at Norwood Cottage (later known as Flower Cottage) on Effingham Common. The 1921 Census finds Frederick with his son John – but not Annie – living at 'The Halt', Effingham Junction and his occupation given as 'caterer and smallholding' in which

capacity he was an employer. Meanwhile, Annie was in London visiting her widowed mother Helen at Flat 3 in 13, Kildare Gardens, Paddington.

The Halt was a small single-storey building constructed in the inter-war years immediately to the north of Effingham Junction railway station. It was of single-skin timber-framed construction. It contained a shop which was probably the first one at the Junction. Adjoined to this was a small hall used during the day as a tea room, having a large open fireplace to keep customers warm during the winter months. In the evenings the hall was available for hire. Jim Clarke's narrative states that 'In 1919 Captain Searle organised a first meeting of local ex-servicemen at 'The Halt'.



Figure 3 The view southwards towards Effingham Junction Station ticket office, marked here by a red spot; The Halt comprised the structures marked with blue and orange spots; 1930s or a little earlier.



Figure 4 The Halt is seen here at the left; the green spot marks the Station Cottages; the large structure at the right is believed not to have been associated with The Halt; 1930s or a little earlier.

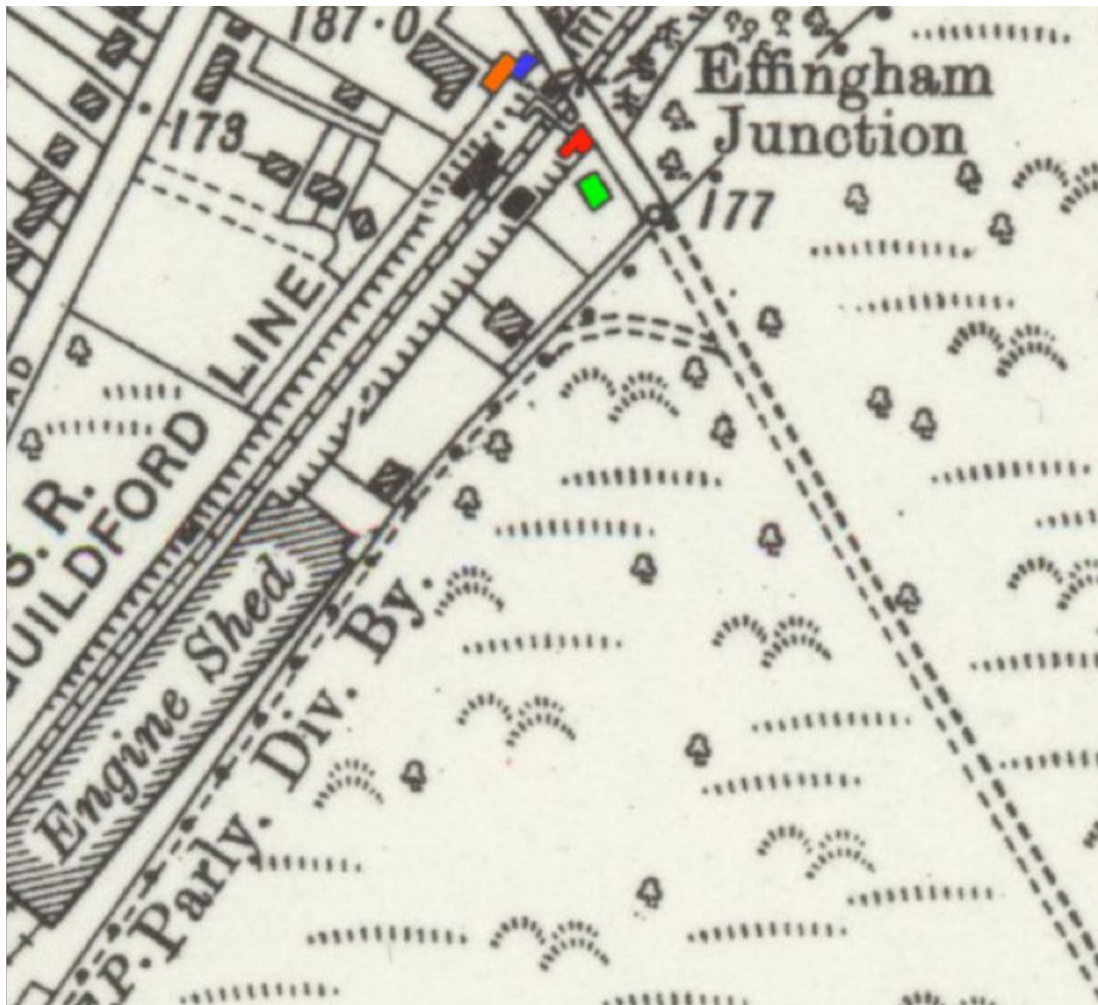


Figure 5 Effingham Junction on the OS map for 1934; red – the Station ticket office; green – Nos 1 & 2 Station Cottages; blue – the shop part of The Halt; orange – the tea rooms.



Figure 6 Inside The Halt – the hall ("Small Dining Room"); 1930s or a little earlier.

The Electoral Registers for 1922-24 list Frederick and Annie at 'The Bungalow' in East Horsley. This may have been The Halt or some other property – the matter is confused by the fact that Frederick, besides his running The Halt, was also an estate agent. In 1923, for example, he was advertising for sale a brick-built bungalow – having two reception rooms, four bedrooms and bathrooms – 'three minutes' from the station [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 6 and 20 October 1923]; many such advertisements by him appear during the 1920s and 1930s. During 1925-51 the family is listed consistently at The Halt in the Electoral Registers.

In July 1925 the Surrey Council of the British Legion chose the village of Elstead in which to hold one of their quarterly conferences, at which it was reported that 'In the near future it was hoped to establish branches at Belmont, Tatsfield, Chobham and Effingham' [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 22 July 1925]. This is consistent with Jim Clarke's account of the formation of the Effingham Branch later that year, with Frederick chosen as its Secretary.

The Twenties and Thirties

We have little knowledge of the activities of the Branch in its earliest years, the late Twenties. Clarke relates that the meetings had no fixed venue, but took place in local pubs and halls. It is not known how many members it had initially. Without a headquarters of their own it would have been difficult to build a distinctive identity and, in consequence, to attract the attention of the newspapers.

In July 1927 there was a major parade by the Legion's branches in Surrey, for inspection by HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught, a soldier with a distinguished military career and a grandson of Queen Victoria. They were mustered on Ranmore Common, numbering over a thousand members. Many major figures in the county were present. A very long article was published listing all the representatives of the branches attending and then describing the day's activities [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 20 July 1927]. It is very surprising to find that the list of 33 Surrey branches attending did not include Effingham's.

As the Thirties got underway newspaper reports about the Effingham Branch began to appear, almost all in *The Surrey Advertiser*. In this section, rather than annotate each extracted detail with its newspaper source we provide in Appendix IV a list of the articles from which those details were drawn.

On 24 January 1931 it was reported that the Branch had added over 60 members during the previous month alone and on 14 February would be staging a dance in order to raise funds for a Standard. In March a whist drive was held at the Effingham Women's Institute hall (a converted cow shed at The Crossroads on which the WI branch had taken a 40-year lease), where the first and second ladies' prizes were won by two men, Mr Street and Mr Poland. By April the Standard had been acquired and was dedicated at St Lawrence Church on 12 April. More than 300 Legionaires from various parts of Surrey attended the ceremony which was conducted by the priest-in-charge, Rev Henry Meredith Larnier. Dances and whist drives continued through the year. In November the Branch, together with children from the school, placed poppy wreaths on the memorial ('shrine') at St Lawrence Church.

Clarke's narrative states that during 1931 discussions had been opened with Mrs Dolores ('Lola') Pauling, formerly of The Lodge, about the possibility of purchasing from her an acre or two of her land (part of The Lodge Farm) on the northern side of Lower Road. The activities of the Branch were very much focused at this time upon raising funds to finance such a purchase.

The attendance at Branch meetings in this period is possibly typified by one that took place in the 'Catholic hut' (by invitation of Father Prince) on 2 February 1932, presided over by Frederick. About 50 members attended and agreed to contribute 6d per head to the Menin Gate fund.

A major event in Effingham took place on Whit Monday 16 May 1932, namely a village fête held by the Branch to raise money for a headquarters. Its chief organiser was the Branch's President, Guy Meyrick Mallaby Mallaby-Deeley of Slaters Oak. It was opened by Vice-Admiral Bentinck John Davies Yelverton who had commanded many ships during the First World War; after retiring he had settled in Great Bookham, living at Mead House on the Guildford Road. The fête was staged on Browns Field, by permission of Captain John Dumville Botterell, owner of Browns and sported various side-shows including fortune-telling, bubbles, coconut shies, hoop-la, bowling for a pig, darts, a gold mine and a revolving horse. Music was provided by the band of the 1st Battalion of the Duke of Westminster's Regiment. In the evening an added attraction was a concert held in the WI Hall. We are not told how many attended the fete but an advertisement published in advance on 7 May had invited the attendance of 2,000 people. The aim of the event was to raise £150 towards a headquarters.

In January 1933 the Branch organised a children's post-Christmas party held in the WI Hall. The tea was provided by Annie Searle whilst the part of Father Christmas was played by Major Herbert Oliver Cundall. He had provided a Christmas tree that had been decorated with multi-coloured lights by his wife Dorothy Maud, and from this tree he now distributed gifts to 120 children. The party included singing, games and, in the evening, a concert entertainment.

Another Whit Monday fête was organised by the Branch in 1933, held on 5 June in the meadow behind Grove House (formerly The Villa, on the Guildford Road). The organising committee had again been chaired by the President, Mallaby-Deeley, and the event was again opened by Vice-Admiral Yelverton. There appear to have been even more side-shows than in the preceding year. The negotiations with Mrs Pauling were still ongoing and the expectation now was to purchase from her about half an acre next to the Catholic Church (Our Lady of Sorrows). In his speech at this fête Yelverton said that '£115 had already been raised, which paid for the site of the proposed headquarters, and left a small balance'. Presumably, his intended meaning was that most of that £115 *would be paid in due course* at such time as a conveyance was executed. Plans for a building on the proposed site had already been prepared and the Branch needed to raise another £500.

In this year the Branch held its Annual Meeting on 11 October, with about 50 members attending. Mallaby-Deeley was elected as President and Frederick as Chairman. The usual arrangements were agreed for Poppy Day and the laying of wreaths on the three local war memorials. Church parades would be held at Effingham, Great Bookham and Little Bookham on Armistice Sunday.

As 1933 drew to its end the Branch was able to conclude its purchase of the headquarters site. For the price of £100 an area 0.362 acres was conveyed from Mrs Pauling and her Trustees to the Branch Trustees. The Conveyance is transcribed in Appendix II. Clarke states that the parties signed it on 14 December, although the document is dated 29 December, when the transfer of title would become effective. His account describes the process of building the headquarters, which got underway almost immediately using local labour – 'Mr Wells was employed at a wage of £3.15s per week to oversee the construction'.

There soon arose some setbacks, however, arising from cash-flow issues, and in February 1934 work had to be suspended. It resumed after a loan of £225 was obtained, possibly from the Mallaby-Deeley family. Clarke states that 'Mr Wells had to give up but his son would continue at 1s 6d per hour.' The reference to 'Wells' resonates with a remark made by Monica O'Connor in *The History of Effingham in Surrey* (1973) in the one paragraph where she writes about the early years of the Branch. There she states that 'Mr. Brad Wells supervised the building work ...' She also mentions that 'Brad Wells' (whom we have been unable to identify) had been on the Branch committee formed in 1924. These assertions may not be reliable, as her paragraph contains at least five factual errors. Her account was evidently drawn from a two-page typed document, *History of The British Legion, Effingham and the Bookhams – from 1920 to 1970*, of unspecified authorship held by Surrey Archaeological Society [SAS Ref: 300/23/2]. This contains very many mistakes and is too unreliable to justify quoting its details here.

Another person said to have worked on the building of the headquarters, doing the bricklaying, was Thomas Maurice Proctor, born in London in 1889, who had served with the 2nd Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment in the First World War. In the 1930s he was living with his wife Marie Charlotte (née Pontave) and children in a flat within the stable block of The Lodge, almost directly opposite to the new headquarters. He had a series of occupations, including that of AA man at the main Effingham crossroads.



Figure 7 Thomas Maurice Proctor as AA man at the Effingham crossroads; about 1926-27.

The Branch's Whit Monday fête in May 1934 was again held in the meadow next to Grove House, by permission of its owner Anthony Nicholas Diamantidi. This time it was opened by Mrs H C Willock-Pollen and music was provided by the Queen's Royal Regiment. Its aim was to raise more money for the building fund which stood at £250. More than 500 people attended. A newspaper report about the event gave the probable opening date of the new headquarters as July or August and the estimated cost as £450.

By July, however, the headquarters had still not been completed. A further article on 14 July explained that the cost estimate had risen to £585 and that the Branch was 'urgently in need of funds'. Donations had raised £110, another £225 had been borrowed and £250 was still outstanding. In order to reduce labour costs the Branch committee and members, currently numbering 140, had 'put their shoulders to the wheel' whilst the architect and surveyor, Mr Herbert William Ford of Bookham, had given his services free of charge. The building would contain a main hall, 50ft by 30ft and sufficient to accommodate 250 people, a refreshment bar, billiards tables and space for other games. The fireplace, already installed, contained an old oak beam on which 'a local youth' had carved the crest of the British Legion. The expected completion date had been pushed back to September.

The demands of the building project seem not to have diminished the efforts of the members in raising funds for other purposes. In September it was reported that the Branch had raised nearly £247 for Earl Haig's British Legion Appeal Fund on Poppy Day, an amount surpassing those raised by several much larger villages and towns in East Surrey.

The new headquarters finally opened on 13 October 1934 but there are varying accounts of it. According to Clarke's account it had been agreed that Mrs Greville (of Polesden Lacey) would be invited to perform the official opening. However, if invited, she had evidently declined, because on 6 October *The Surrey Advertiser and County Times* announced that the headquarters would be formally opened by Sir Harry Mallaby-Deeley (the father of Guy Meyrick). In the event, this did not happen either – it was opened by Major G E Cohen, Chairman of the Surrey Council of the Legion. The full article describing the ceremony, published a week later in *The Surrey Advertiser and County Times*, is shown in Appendix III.



Figure 8 OS 1934 6" map highlighting the headquarters in pink.

A month later, the first function in the new hall was held, on 10 November, being the Branch's Annual Dinner under the chairmanship of Mr A W Carter. Among the large company present were the President Mr Mallaby-Deeley, Frederick Searle (Chairman), Captain Ivor Alexander Whitworth McGowan, Colonel Leopold d'Estreville Lenfestey, Majors Herbert Oliver Cundall and F O N Burn, Rev Harold Arthur Floud (St Lawrence Church), Rev A L Drinkwater (Little Bookham Church) and Father Francis Bird (Our Lady of Sorrows). Frederick said that the hall had come into being thanks to the generosity of friends who had guaranteed the interest on the £425 that was still outstanding. From this remark it appears that most of the

£250 that had been outstanding in July had not been raised but had instead been borrowed, on top of the £225 already borrowed.

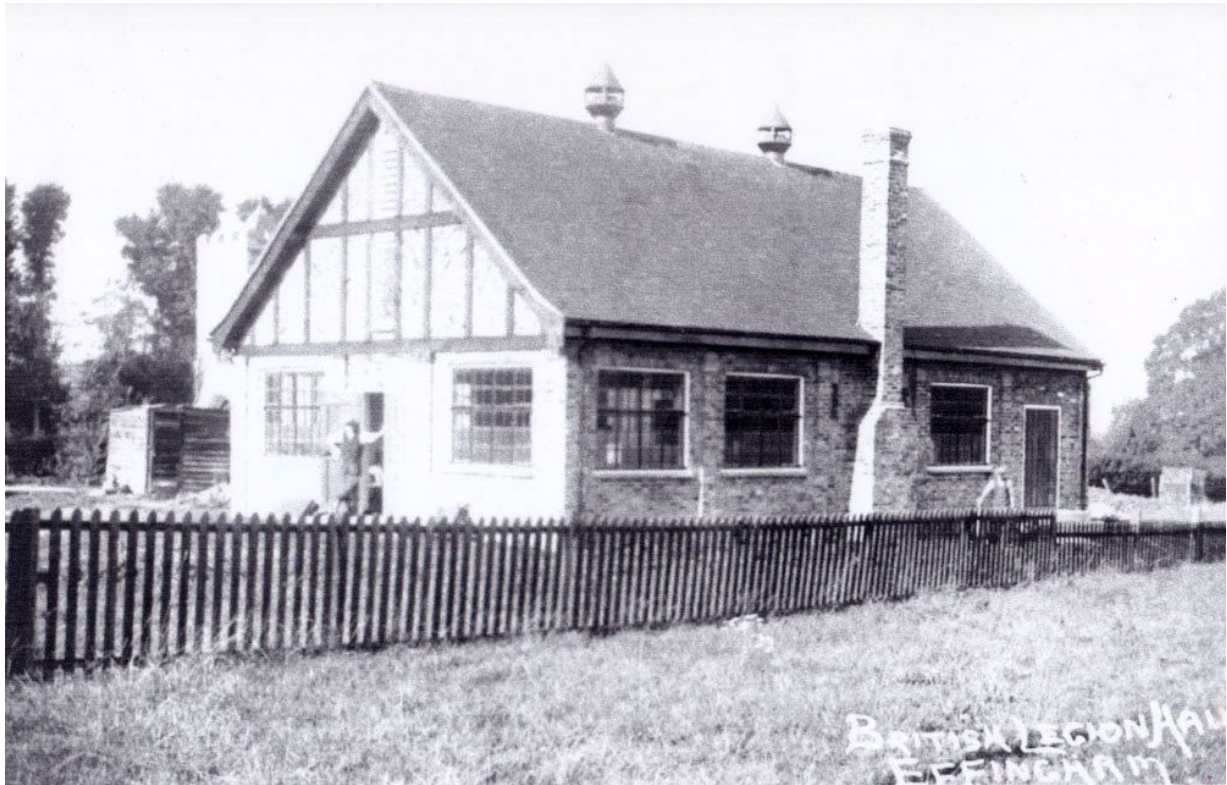


Figure 9 The newly completed headquarters; a resident once told ELHG that the person seen here standing in the doorway was 'Brad' Wells; this postcard (publisher unknown) belongs in a series with others that were being mostly used in the second half of the 1930s; it is an interesting early view of the building before it was surrounded by the later yellow brick extensions to the front and sides (see Fig 35) which masked its original simple and attractive design.

Clarke states that earlier in 1934, in May, the Branch had changed its title from 'Effingham and District' to 'Effingham and The Bookhams'. However, this change was not evident in the various newspaper reports about the Branch for more than a year afterwards. It was not until the reporting of the Branch's Whit Monday fête on 10 June 1935 that we first find the new title being cited. This event was held in a field 'adjoining the Legion Hall ... by invitation of Mr E A [Ernest Arthur] Killick'. It appears to have had a rather more extensive range of side-shows than its predecessors and also featured a tug-of-war contest between the Branch and the Horsley branch, the latter being victorious. This fête raised about £40 towards the building fund, which was being gradually used to repay the loans.

By this time the Branch was engaging with other nearby branches in games tournaments, although reports do not make clear what kind of games. As one example, such a tournament was held in February 1937 at the branch of East and West Horsley, in which the latter was the winner. In May 1937 the Branch President Sir Guy Meyrick Mallaby Mallaby-Deeley – now titled 'Sir' since the death on 4 February of his father Harry and his becoming 2nd Baronet (Mitcham Court) – organised a collection for the British Legion Pension Fund and also for the King George's Jubilee Trust Fund, raising altogether £14.

EFFINGHAM

HIRE A CAR & DRIVE YOURSELF.
 Smart Saloon Cars for Hire. Chauffeur-driven or drive yourself. — BIRCH, The Garage, HORSLEY TOWERS Phone: East Horsley 2626.—Advt.

Organised by Sir Guy Mallaby Deeley, the collection at Effingham for the British Legion Pension Fund and the King George's Jubilee Trust Fund realised £14 6s. 10d.

Figure 10 Mallaby-Deeley's collection; 1937.

The Jubilee Trust Fund was a national scheme introduced in 1935 with the object of providing 'more and better facilities for the recreation and guidance of the younger generation', a mission with some similarity to that of the King George's Fields Foundation, a separate initiative launched in 1936 which would soon have a far-reaching and long-lasting impact upon the recreational provision in Effingham.

The Whit Monday fête of 1937 included the new feature of Benson's Fun Fair. The Chairmanship of the Branch had by now passed to Captain McGowan. At the Annual Dinner of 1937 the toast of the Branch was proposed by Joseph Stewart Adams, headmaster of the village's Effingham Council School (later St Lawrence School). Stewart Adams, a veteran of the Salonika campaign in the First World War, was a committed stalwart of the Branch. The annual Christmas (or post-Christmas) children's parties had become a regular fixture in the Branch's calendar and would continue so for many years. The party following Christmas in 1937 was held on 15 January 1938 and attended by seventy children; besides the customary feature of Father Christmas distributing gifts (of sweets, chocolate and fruit), there was also a new offering, a 'cinematograph entertainment'.

BRITISH LEGION



Effingham & The Bookhams Branch

GRUB UP AND DIG IN !

And when you lads with shining faces pass,
Not like twenty years ago upon the grass—
But sitting down at table at this spot
Where I made one—to lift a brimming glass.
(Apologies).

FOR THE

DINNER

ON

SATURDAY, 12th NOVEMBER, 1938

IN THE

Legion Hall, Lower Road, Effingham

Chairman - Mr. W. A. Muggeridge

Come dressed in your usual way,
With gongs, ties, badges and all.
Doors open at seven-thirty, they say,
Then dinner—wait for the Chairman's call.

Figure 11 (right and below) Branch Annual Dinner at the new HQ; 12 November 1938.

MENU



Landsdell has arranged the feast
With the help of Committee-men's wives,
And they all feel with such a spread
You'll have the time of your lives.

Oxtail Soup

Roast Pork Roast Beef

Mashed Potatoes

Salad

Apple Tart and Custard

Fruit Salad Jellies

Cheese and Biscuits

Celery

Coffee

TOASTS



One Minute Silence and Exhortation

Grace

The King

Silent Toast to our Fallen Comrades

Comrades of the Great War

Effingham & The Bookhams Branch
of the British Legion

Poppy Day Sellers and The Ladies

"In the haze of this uncertain world,
Amid the strain, and stress, and strife,
Let us, our standard still unfurled,
Bring peace, goodwill—and new life."

In February 1939 Frederick's brother George William died. He had lived at Effingham Junction for fourteen years and had always been an active member of the Branch. In this year the timing of the annual fête broke with tradition – it was held not on Whit Monday but two months later in July. By now the intention had been made to extend the hall and this event's fund raising was in aid of this. The event was opened by Major Leslie John Barley DSO who had recently taken up residence in Effingham, at 'East Court' on Effingham Hill and had become a member of the Branch. In his speech he said that

'He had been impressed by the friendliness and the spirit of cooperation of the Effingham people and by the lack of classes and cliques. There was a spirit about Effingham which was rarely found.'

In the evening there was a dance in the hall to Mr Metcalfe's Band at which 120 people attended. By the end of the year the membership, as reported at the Annual Dinner, stood at 166. In this period membership of the Club (as distinct from the Branch) was applied for using the form shown below.

FORM C.
RULE 10

BRITISH LEGION CLUB (EFFINGHAM) LIMITED

APPLICATION FOR "SOCIAL" MEMBERSHIP.

*To the Committee,
British Legion Club (Effingham) Ltd.*

Gentlemen,

I, the undersigned, being ineligible for the British Legion, and concurring with the purposes of the above Club, desire to become a member and, in the absence of vacancies for ordinary members, hereby apply for social membership. I undertake, if elected, to observe and be bound by the rules and by-laws, and understand that my membership as a social member is liable to be terminated at the close of any financial year. My age is.....

Usual Signature

Surname
(In Block Letters)

Christian Names
(In Block Letters)

Occupation

Address in full
(In Block Letters)

Entrance Fee 1/-

Subscription 3/6

Date

Proposed by

Seconded by

Figure 12 Club membership application form; this example from 1940.

The Branch during and shortly after the Second World War

Very little about the Branch was reported in the newspapers during the Second World War. On 11 January 1947 a reunion supper and concert was held at the hall for Effingham ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen, paid for from the balance of the Effingham parish Victory celebrations. The former President Sir Guy Mallaby-Deeley had died a year earlier, on 21 January 1946, and the position was now held by Captain McGowan. At the reunion supper he welcomed back the honorary Secretary Colonel Lenfestey who had been 'long incapacitated as the result of an accident'.



Figure 13 Capt Ivor Alexander W McGowan; in France during the First World War.



Figure 14 Col Leopold d'Estreville Lenfestey; pre 1901.

The doings of the Branch and the Club from this point up to 1961 are best described by Clarke's account in Appendix I as he was able to draw directly upon the surviving records available to him. However, there is a particular paragraph in that account, pertaining to the late 1940s, worth noting here as it provides some potential insight into the eventual demise of the Branch and the Club about seventy years later. He writes:

June 1947: it was proposed to transfer the Trusteeship of the Branch to Legion HQ as one trustee had died and another, Chairman Capt McGowan, was leaving the district. This was finally done in June 1948, by a motion carried with 14 for and 13 against at a Special General Meeting. It was also proposed that a proper lease be drawn up between Branch and Club instead of the existing verbal one; a draft lease was drawn up and agreed.

The first point here is that – in our interpretation of the above – the freehold of the site with its building was transferred from people local to Effingham to the overarching national Legion, a body that would not be expected to hold dear the specific interests of Effingham's residents. The second point was also a potent one: the loosely-coupled connection that had existed between Branch and Club based on a wholly informal understanding about the use of the premises would be replaced by a legal document bearing definitions, clauses, commitments and signatures, and be of finite duration.

At the start of this post-war period the spirit of the Branch was perhaps not dissimilar to that which had prevailed in the analogous period after the First World War. It would have provided a focal point for returning ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen, still bearing the memories, private and shared, of the ordeals they had suffered. Both Branch and Club would be attentive to the needs not only of these ex-service personnel but also of those who had not been involved in military action but had suffered its consequences; these included people whose relatives had been killed or had returned with life-changing injuries, or whose past modes of earning a living had evaporated, or whose homes had been destroyed or damaged. All this would provide the context for continuing charitable works, the original intended mission of the Legion. But as the years passed this context would gradually fade. During the rest of the century there would be, for Britain, no more wars requiring mass enlistment and there would be no more military onslaughts (such as air raids) upon our own soil. The significance of the Legion would in time be sensed by an ever-shrinking pool of residents, whilst the Club would see its traditional activities – billiards and snooker tournaments with other Legion clubs, whist drives with other parishes and so on – eventually eclipsed by a stronger focus on wholly localised social drinking at the Club bar. When the Fifties began to unfold, however, this altered future was still distant and perhaps unperceived.

We are fortunate to possess some very clear evidence of the vibrancy of the Branch near the start of this new decade, by way of an excellent, high-resolution photograph presented below showing an Annual Dinner in the Branch headquarters.



Figure 15 Annual Dinner at the Branch headquarters; very probably 15 November 1952.

ELHG holds two copies of this photograph, from two different donors. One of these donors additionally provided a document identifying (in some cases incorrectly) about half of the persons seen in the photograph and suggested that the event may have taken place in 1947. The other donor provided other photographs that were clearly close-up views taken at the same event and on the reverse side of one was written in pencil the words '1952 Nov 15 Annual Dinner' and in biro the words 'Legion Welcome Home Dinner for Service Men'. The 1947 possibility can seemingly be eliminated because one of the aforementioned close-ups shows, very clearly, former Effingham resident Charles Edward ('Eddie') William Crouch and, more significantly, shows that he was wearing a ring – presumed to be a wedding ring – on the fourth finger of his left hand: Eddie married in 1950. We are therefore much inclined to date the event to

15 November 1952, although it seems doubtful that it would have been a 'Welcome Home Dinner' five years after the War's end.

The Annual Dinner of 1952 was indeed held on 15 November, as reported in *The Surrey Advertiser and County Times* on 22 November. By then the Branch President was the Effingham vicar Rev John Walter Reynolds. In his speech he made a plea 'that the annual dinner should be retained as it did so much to keep the men of the British Legion together'. He continued:

'Tomorrow it will be just nine years since I moved in as a complete stranger to Effingham. Many of you were far overseas and were only names to me. Some of you at home I did get to know. One of the earliest things I did was to come to this club. Nine years ago I had a very warm welcome here. Well, I am still here and I hope to remain here a long time, and I hope we will always have this fellowship as we have had tonight.'

The Branch Secretary, Frederick Norton Shrubshall, proposed the toast of 'The British Legion and the Club' and Mr P R Drew toasted 'The Lady Helpers for serving an excellent meal so quickly'. The next photograph highlights a particular group of four attendees.



Figure 16 The four people facing the camera have been identified as (left to right) Mr Durban, George Biles, Robert Wells and the latter's son-in-law Eddie Crouch; the man seen in the top left-hand corner was the Branch Secretary Mr Shrubshall; very probably 15 November 1952.

We have been unable to discover any more about Mr Durban.

George Biles, born in 1916, was one of three sons produced by gamekeeper (and later gardener) John Biles and his wife Violet Eliza (née Taylor). In the War he had served with the Royal Artillery.

Before the War he had been a builder's labourer living with his parents at 2, Victory Cottages. He had returned to live with them there after being demobbed. His older brother Arthur William, doubtless also attending this Annual Dinner, had served with the Rifle Brigade, whilst his younger brother Francis had served in the Royal Navy and had died in action in 1942.

After the War he worked as a bricklayer for the local building firm Tyrrell and Ranger. He married rather late in life, in 1979, to a widow Brenda ('Rene') Leonorah C (née Waterer) Chitty, at St Lawrence Church. He died in 1988.



Figure 17 (at left) George Biles (right-most) with his brother Francis during the Second World War; (above) George in close-up.



Figure 18 George Biles (right-most) with friend 'Jack' in the Club; 1980s.

Robert Wells, born in 1896, was one of at least twelve children produced by bricklayer Arthur Wells and his wife Elizabeth (née Dench). Arthur may have been the 'Brad' Wells who had reputedly built the headquarters in the 1930s. When the First World War broke out Robert had volunteered for the Army, attesting at Guildford on 18 August 1914 and giving his age as 18 and 11 months, his birthplace as Hersham and his employment as a painter's labourer. These details come from his entry in the Regimental Rolls and Recruitment Registers, 1908-1947 kept by the Queen's Royal (West Surrey) and East Surrey Regiments. His medal card records that he had served in firstly the Queen's Royal Regiment, then the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, then the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment and finally the Queen's Royal Regiment. As well as the standard three campaign medals he had also been awarded the Military Medal and promoted to Corporal. We do not know which theatres of war he had served in. He had been discharged on 8 December 1919. During the Second World War he had served in Effingham's Home Guard and had been a staunch member of the British Legion.

Eddie Crouch was born in 1926 and so had been only a young teenager in 1939. Later during the Second World War he had briefly joined the Army but then been discharged for medical reasons. He had first come to Effingham in 1946 for employment and in 1950 had married Robert Wells' daughter Elizabeth ('Betty') May. In 1953 he would become Effingham's Parish Council Clerk and would serve in that role for fifty years, then as Chairman.

The photograph below was taken at this same event in November 1952. The person at left is Percy Chitty and standing next to him is Ben Poulter (the donor of the photograph), whilst 3rd from left (behind the counter, holding a tray of drinks) is George Biles; 4th from left (with face partly hidden) is Bert Crick, and 5th from left is Bill Miles.



Figure 19 Percy Chitty, Ben Poulter, George Biles and others; very probably 15 November 1952.

Percy's full name was Percy William Chitty, born on 8 May 1917 to parents Albert James (born in 1874) and Rosa (née Tidy). He was a nephew and namesake of Albert James' younger brother Percy William born in 1884. The latter (Percy senior) had married Sally (née) Whittington at St Lawrence, Effingham on 24 June 1916, during his military service in the Army, having already been sent to France in 1914. A more detailed account of him and of the Whittington family was contributed by ELHG in 2018 to the Surrey Heritage project *Surrey in the Great War: A County Remembers* and can be read on that project's website at <https://www.surreyinthegreatwar.org.uk>.

Percy (junior) had married at St Lawrence, Effingham on 29 September 1945 to Mary Ellen ('Molly') (née) Searle, and a photograph of their wedding appears to show him in military attire, but we know nothing yet of what he had been doing during the Second World War. Before the War he had been living with two younger siblings – Ernest Edward and Mary — at 22, Fairfield Cottages in Great Bookham and working as a plumber. It is tempting to wonder whether his wife Mary had been related to Frederick John Searle, founder of Effingham's Branch of the Legion, especially as her father George Reuben had been a railway signaller, but we have been unable to find any connection between their families. Percy (junior)'s brother Ernest Edward had been the first husband of Brenda ('Rene') Leonorah C. (née Waterer) who, as noted earlier, had later remarried to George Biles.



Figure 20 The wedding of Percy William Chitty and Mary Ellen Searle; 29 September 1945.

The next photograph also bore the date 'November 1952' on its reverse. It shows some of the attendees at an Exhibition Snooker evening held at the Branch headquarters; the guest players were the champions Herbert Holt and Joyce Gardner. The persons seen here were identified by the donor of the photograph, Violet Edith Jane (née Biles) Green, as (right-to-left) Mr. Giddens, Eddie Crouch, Victor D. Green (Violet's husband), Frank Ernest Loxley and Edward Philip ('Phil') Poland (the man wearing a cap at the rear, face only), the remaining two men at far left being unidentified. The event was certainly not on the day of the Annual Dinner because Eddie is here in entirely different attire. Snooker and billiards were being played extensively by Effingham's Legion club against other local clubs. For example, the *Essex News and Mail* of 12 December 1952 published league tables featuring Effingham for both snooker and billiards.



Figure 21 Exhibition Snooker evening at the Branch; November 1952.

A better image of Phil (Edward Philip) Poland is found in the earlier Annual Dinner photograph. He was one of several children born to Arthur James Poland and his wife Agnes Louisa (née Collins) who had married in 1911. The first child was a girl Gladys Louisa (born 1912). She was followed by three boys, Phil (born 1914), Kenneth Leslie (born 1920) and Ronald James (born 1923). Before and during the 1920s and all the 1930s the family lived in Effingham at 2, Church Cottages, the southernmost of the two semi-detached cottages next to the old forge in Church Street. The 1939 National Register finds Phil there with his parents and brothers, their father occupied as an engineer and inspector working on aircraft. Phil was occupied as a confectioner (cake maker) and Kenneth as a milkman.

During the Second World War Ronald served as a trooper in the Royal Armoured Corps, Nottinghamshire Yeomanry; he landed in Normandy on D-Day but was then invalided home due to illness and died on 18 September 1944 following an operation in the Middlesex Hospital. Three months later his brother Kenneth, serving with the Royal Engineers, was killed in action in Italy on 30 December 1944 aged 24.



Figure 22 Phil Poland; probably 15 Nov 1952.

Phil had therefore lost both of his younger brothers. We do not know his own activities during the War. After the War he moved to 52, Darcy Road in Ashted with his wife Muriel (née Day) whom he had married in 1943. He remained at that address until his death in October 1995. His ashes were interred in the grave of his brother Ronald at St Lawrence. His brother Kenneth is also commemorated on Ronald's gravestone but lies in the Cesena War Cemetery, Emilia-Romagna, Italy.

On 20 December 1952 the Branch staged a Christmas party for members' children. It was reported in *The Surrey Advertiser and County Times* on 27 December as follows:

PARTY GAMES AND TOYS

Bookham and Effingham British Legion entertained members' children to a party on Saturday. Over 80 children during the afternoon were kept amused with games and songs. Toys were distributed by Father Christmas from a Christmas tree. After the party Legion members and wives and friends returned to enjoy a social evening.'

The next photograph was almost certainly taken at this event, being part of the same batch containing the photographs from 1952 shown earlier.



Figure 23 Children's Christmas party staged by the Branch; probably 20 December 1952.

Later years in the life of the Branch

Jim Clarke's notes provide a few snippets relating to the remainder of the Fifties and the last note he makes about the Branch pertains to 1961. At the present time ELHG has only newspaper cuttings and some other donated materials with which to tell something of the life of the Branch during the second half of the 20th century.

At its Annual Dinner on 15 November 1953 the Branch was singled out for praise on account of its 'better spirit' by the Chairman of the Surrey British Legion which in his view was the finest county Legion in the country [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 18 November 1953]. He was pleased to see so many youngsters in attendance at this dinner, noting their responsibility to play their part as officers of the Branch besides their activities for the Club.

In March 1955 the Branch Secretary Mr Shrubshall died, having served in that role for over twelve years [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 26 March 1955]. He was interred at St Lawrence. On 17 December the Branch staged a dance to raise assistance for the widow Margaret Mary (née Nicholls) of Cecil James Pratley who a few weeks earlier had been accidentally killed by electrocution while working at Mizen's Nurseries on Lodge

Farm [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 24 December 1955]. The event was organised by Victor Green (pictured earlier) and raised £29 for her.

The Branch evidently achieved a good turnout for a Remembrance Day service held at St Nicolas, Bookham on 8 November 1959, led by its President Mr M Wilkinson and the Chairman of its Women's Section Mrs Mary Freelove, bearing their standards [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 14 November 1959]. There were also 80 Scouts on parade as well as Cubs, Guides and Brownies.

In late 1961 at its Annual Meeting the Branch paid a special tribute to its standard bearer William Henry Bonsey for his 'outstanding and meritorious service to the British Legion' [*The Surrey Advertiser and County Times*, 2 December 1961]. He was presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Branch Chairman William Freelove.

It had long been the practice of the Branch to arrange occasional parties, concerts and other events for the residents in the Surrey County Council's home for epileptic women at The Lodge. On 18 January 1964, for example, about 35 such residents were the guests of honour at a party staged in the Branch headquarters, organised by the women's section under their leader Mrs Waterer [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 25 January 1964].

The next photograph shows another such post-Christmas party. It comes from a cutting (newspaper unknown) dated 'New Year 1967' which states that 28 residents of The Lodge attended. The lady smiling towards the camera was Mrs Charlotte Lambert who, being in her early 80s, was the oldest such resident. After the tea, games were played and a box of chocolates was given to each guest as they left.



Figure 24 Party at the Branch headquarters for residents of The Lodge; January 1967.

A similar event was held the following year in early February, for thirty residents of The Lodge, and was described as 'their bright spot of the year' [*The Surrey Advertiser and County Times*, 10 February 1968]. The youngest was Miss Evelyn Skilton aged 25 and the oldest was still Charlotte Lambert aged 84 (but misreported as 'Caroline'). The party this time was run by six members of the men's section with James ('Jim') Daniel Richard Wakeford acting as MC. After the tea he and other members entertained with games and singing.



Figure 25 Party at the Branch headquarters for residents of The Lodge; February 1968.

On 30 June 1968 the Branch arranged a 'mystery tour' for seventy elderly people, travelling in two coaches to Frensham Ponds and the Devil's Punch Bowl, Hindhead. On their return they were served high tea by the women's section and then played bingo, for which 'numerous prizes' were won [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 6 July 1968].

In 1970 the usual post-Christmas party was held on 27 January [*The Surrey Advertiser and County Times*, 30 January 1970], run by the women's section chaired by Mrs Wells.



Figure 26 A similar party at the Branch headquarters for residents of The Lodge; 27 January 1970.



Figure 27 Another party given for residents of The Lodge; probably late 1960s or early 1970s.

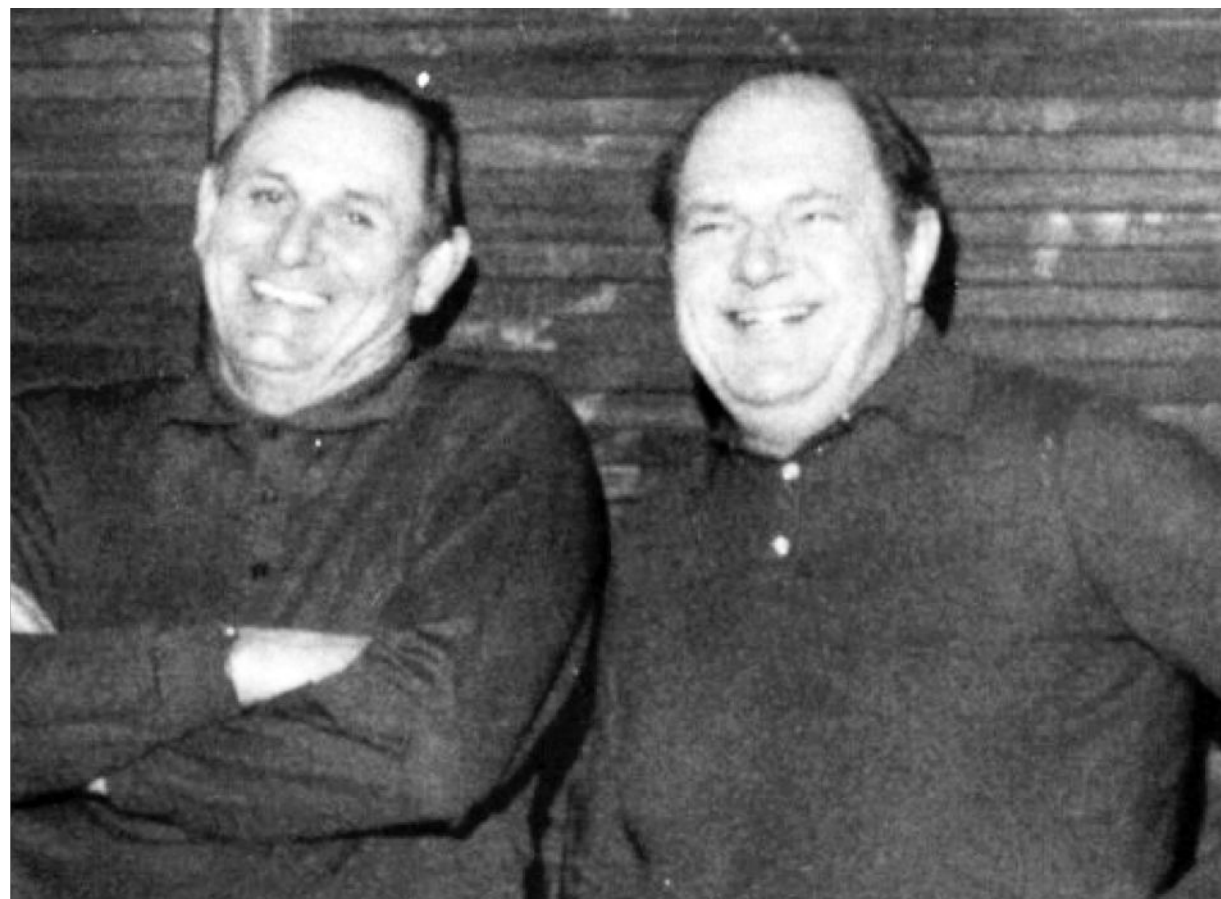


Figure 28 Detail from above; two stalwart members of the Branch – Jim Wakeford (left) and Jim Clarke.



Figure 29 Another party given for residents of The Lodge; at centre front is Jim Clarke and behind him left of centre (wearing glasses) is local butcher Colin L Gibb; January 1972.



Figure 30 At the entrance to the Club, left to right, (Walter) George Ranger, unknown, Colin L Gibb; date unknown but probably 1960s or 1970s.

At a meeting in November 1973 the Branch and Club officers noted the help that was still needed by ex-service personnel and the importance of the annual poppy collection. The club was still flourishing and it was hoped to extend the building to provide necessary amenities [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 23 November 1973]. A week or so later the women members were entertained by a play performed by the Effingham Women's Institute – 'Costumes were made for Henry VIII's queens from materials picked up at jumble sales' [*The Surrey Advertiser*, 7 December 1973].

The following photograph is of unknown date but we believe it was probably taken in the 1970s. It shows branch members holding snooker trophies. On the reverse of the original print are these identifications: back row – 'Mr Bennet, Peter Taylor, Dave Wishart, Jim Tyrell [sic – Tyrrell], John Dicks, Bill Cude, Bill Coon'; middle row – 'Arthur Locke, Frank Loxley, Billy Dicks (the source of the photograph), Gerald Houlton'; front row – 'unknown, Alf Galloway, Taffy James, Maxi McDermot, Bert Tyrell [sic – Tyrrell]'.



Figure 31 Snooker players at the Branch; perhaps 1970s.

In April 1989 the Branch laid up its old Standard and dedicated a new one. The dedication ceremony took place on 30 April at St Lawrence, the service officiated by the Branch Chaplain Rev Alan Hodgetts, being described (in advance) in *The Leatherhead Advertiser* on 13 April. Two scouts from the 1st Stoughton Band would sound the Retreat and Reveille on their bugles. The salute would be taken by the Mayor of Guildford Mrs Elizabeth Cobbett and Lord Auckland, the County's Legion President. Among those attending would be parish and borough councillor Antony ('Tony') Donald Page, the County Chairman Col Denis Higgs, Branch President James George Poulter and Branch Chairman Col C C Metcalfe OBE, together with officers of the County's women's section.

A parade led by the Oatlands Park Pipe and Drum Band would process to the church from the Branch headquarters. The old Standard would be handed to the church, in which it had originally been dedicated, for safekeeping, and the new one handed to the Branch standard bearer, Mr R Poulter. He would be escorted by Mr D Brady and Mr W Coon who had served as the bearer for 26 years and held the Royal British Legion Gold Badge. ELHG is fortunate to have been given, by several donors, a quite large collection of photographs of this event of which some are shown here and several others in Appendix V.



Figure 32 Oatlands Park Pipe and Drum Band leading the parade past Middle Farm; 30 April 1989.



Figure 33 Dedication service at St Lawrence.



Figure 34 Standard bearers outside the HQ.

The Branch and Club continued actively during the 1990s, as far as can be discerned from the occasional newspaper reports about it. In 1990 the Branch became the headquarters of a nationwide Dunkirk Memorial appeal, run by the Royal British Legion, to raise £6 million towards a 70-bed home for Dunkirk veterans [*The Leatherhead Advertiser*, 23 May 1990]. We have one photograph of the headquarters in that year, shown below.



Figure 35 The Branch headquarters, showing the side extensions and a glimpse of the very attractive herring-bone brickwork in the original front gable; 1990.

The headquarters was the venue in 1993 for the annual meeting of the Surrey branch of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association. The Branch Secretary announced that 739 cases had been handled in Surrey in 1992 [*The Leatherhead Advertiser*, 18 March 1993].

In May 1995 there were commemorations across the nation on the 50th anniversary of the Victory in Europe Day celebrated on 8 May 1945. Flower arrangements and exhibitions were staged at St Lawrence in Effingham and St Nicolas in Bookham, attended by an estimated 5,000 visitors [*The Leatherhead Advertiser*, 17 May 1995]. The Branch contributed a 'poignant arrangement' portraying the commemoration of VE Day. Proceeds from the events went to the Royal British Legion and to the St Lawrence church lighting appeal.

The Club staged a 'VE Night' show and dinner in 1995 but we do not know the precise date or the programme details, although we do have several photographs taken at the time.

In 1997 the Club was offering jive sessions as a 'great exercise for all levels of fitness – no jumps or throwing bodies around!' [*The Leatherhead Advertiser*, 5 June 1997].

On 12 September 1999 it held an Autumn Fayre offering 'Stalls, Tombola, Model T Rides & much much more' [*The Leatherhead Advertiser*, 9 September 1999].



Figure 36 SSAFA Meeting at the Branch; March 1993.



Figure 37 VE Night at the Club, with Arnold Pindar in airman's uniform; 1995.



Figure 38 VE Night at the Club; 1995.



Figure 39 VE Night at the Club; 1995.



Figure 40 VE Night dinner at the Club; 1995.



Figure 41 Jazz sessions at the Club; June 1997.



Figure 42 Autumn Fayre; 12 Sept 1999.

Despite the varied and well-received activities described in this article, by the time the 21st century arrived the days of the Branch and Club were numbered. Only those directly involved in the organisation's final stages will know the details of why and how it all came to an end. ELHG has no firm inside knowledge of the matter. Some change of circumstances was already evident in the mid-1990s. The Branch had been registered as a charity (Charity No 239888) on 10 February 1965, but the website of the Charity Commission records that on 26 April 1996 the charity was 'removed (ceased to exist)'. No other information about the charity is provided on the website.

The Club appeared to be going strong up to 2015-16, with disco nights, dances, bikers' nights, New Year's Eve parties, pool competitions, live screen sports and much else; all these activities were evident from its Facebook page. In February 2016 the pool table was newly clothed and cushioned. In May a charity event was organised to raise funds for the Legion for the treatment of combat stress. However, it was later in 2016 that, according to the Facebook site, 'the British Legion closed its doors' and 'the future of the building was unsure'.

At about that time it was rumoured in the village that the lease held by the Club from the Legion (the latter had the freehold of the entire premises) had expired – or was about to expire – and that the amount that was being asked to renew it was entirely beyond the Club's means. If this was indeed the case

then we may assume that the Legion was only acting under a formal obligation to secure the most favourable commercial terms for the continuing use of its premises, an obligation that could not be set aside in deference to history or sentiment. It was also stated by some, erroneously, that the meaning of the 1933 conveyance was that 'the land had been given to the village in perpetuity' and thus the freehold could not be held by the Legion centrally.

Below are some interior views of the Club taken its last year or so, from its now inactive Facebook site:



Figure 43 views above and below of the interior; about 2015-16.



The Club therefore closed and its premises – the part of the building (including the main hall) nearer to Lower Road – remained slightly derelict for a few years while the Royal British Legion sought a new user for it, meanwhile continuing to use the rear part of the building for its own purposes.

Eventually a new lease was granted to enable Beechkeys Ltd, a subsidiary of the Aurora Group, to convert the former club premises into a small independent school. The Aurora Group runs several schools and children's homes for children with special needs. This school, named the Aurora Poppyfield School, was registered by the Department of Education on 9 March 2022 and opened in that year. Most of its pupils, aged 11-16, are placed there by Surrey County Council. The Royal British Legion continues to hold the freehold of the entire site.

The ending of this long life of the Branch and the Club, after nearly a century of worthy activity, has been noted and regretted by several residents with whom ELHG has conducted oral history recordings. Betty and Eddie Crouch, for example, expressed their feelings as follows:

[Betty] 'We used to have dances in the British Legion, we used to have all sorts of things, and they had a Ladies' room and you weren't allowed to come into the big hall in those days when you were children and even in your teens. But when I was older they used to have exhibitions with Joe Davies and his brother and we used to sit out and watch them play snooker. It was a really good hall and they had some really good things there, lots of things going on, but I'm afraid it's all changed now, all different.'

[Eddie] 'The British Legion was a very thriving organisation in those days and it's very sad to see that it has closed down now. It had a tremendous membership. They had a barman who could really play a really good honky-tonk piano and the dances down there on a Saturday night were something else to be believed.'

The Effingham and the Bookhams Branch is just one of many organisations in Effingham that came into being in response to the particular conditions and needs of the time, flourished for a significant period to the benefit of very many residents but eventually declined to the point of extinction when they had become no longer relevant or sustainable. Although ELHG has relatively little material relating to the Branch it is clear from what we do have that for many decades it made a major contribution to the social cohesion of the village, undertook a commendable amount of charitable work and was held up as exemplary among Surrey's branches.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: *Wikimedia*, declared as Public Domain

Figure 2: RBL website <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/stories/100-years-of-rbl>

Figures 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 17, 32, 34, 35, 47, 48, 50: from the late Mary Alfreda (née Bridger) Rice-Oxley

Figures 5, 8: National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/>

Figure 7: from Mary Elizabeth (née Procter) Dyer

Figures 10, 14, 36, 41, 42: by kind permission of Reach plc / Mirrorpix

Figures 12, 24-29: from James Louie Nicholls

Figure 13: from Nadia MacCall

Figures 15, 19, 22: from Ben Poulter

Figures 16, 21, 23: from the late Violet Edith Jane (née Taylor) Green

Figure 18: from Ralph Frank Wallace

Figure 20: from *Ancestry*

Figure 30: from Eileen Ranger

Figure 31: from David Hefford

Figures 33, 45, 46, 49: from the late Jessica Elizabeth (née Harrold) Page

Figures 37-40: from the late James Daniel Richard Wakeford

Figure 43: from *Facebook*

Figure 44: from Susan W Morris

APPENDIX I

Effingham and The Bookhams Royal British Legion (a brief history)
 composed (probably in 2005) by the late James ('Jim') T Clarke of Orestan Lane, Effingham

EFFINGHAM & THE BOOKHAMS
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
(A BRIEF HISTORY)
80TH ANNIVERSARY



BY
JIM CLARKE
SECRETARY



Figure 44 Front cover of the booklet containing Jim Clarke's history of the Branch.

Effingham and The Bookhams Royal British Legion (a brief history)

Following the end of the 'Great War' in 1918 (some say 1919 before it was really all over) the lads and lasses returned – from what, in many cases, must have seemed like Hell – to a 'Land fit for Heroes'. After a while the excitement of returning and surviving was beginning to pall; everyone was beginning to realise that things would never be the same again. Food was scarce, many jobs were no longer there, times for many were hard and the comradeship of service life was still missing.

In the village, friends and neighbours having a hard time were easy to spot and ex-servicemen were able to help each other without embarrassment, forming themselves into associations. In 1921 the British Legion was founded to coordinate these benevolent actions and also to have a greater influence with Government who, it was felt, was not treating the ex-servicemen as they should.

In 1919 Captain Searle organised a first meeting of local ex-servicemen at The Halt, a tea shop just over the bridge at Effingham Junction. Further meetings were held at various venues – The Plough, the W I Hall, the Catholic Church Hall and the Men's Institute. In 1925 more interest prompted an application to the British Legion HQ for registration, so on 4th November 1925 the Effingham and District Branch of the British Legion was formed with its first Committee. The Chairman was Captain Masters, the Treasurer was Mr Raworth and the Secretary was Captain F J Searle, with the Headquarters at The Halt. The Committee was Mr A Poland, Mr J Biles, Mr Muggeridge, Mr B Wells, Mr Turville Kille and Mr Bishop. An Armistice dinner was held, after which meetings continued at various venues, with fund-raising ideas such as dances. Whist drives and smoking concerts helped to raise interest. In 1931 a meeting was arranged with a speaker from Legion HQ. The Committee was reformed and extended. It was reported that the Armistice dinner had made a profit of £2 11s 7d.

In February a case for assistance was unable to be met for lack of funds. Horsley Branch helped out. There were not enough funds to pay a member's hospital bill of less than £2, later reduced by the Chairman of the Hospital Board to 16s.

Various functions continued to raise funds. As the funds increased so did requests for relief. It was reported that one dance raised £9.10s.10d. Personal loans were given by better-off members to those in need. Various funds were started for the purchase of a Standard, for a children's party and outings. In May serious thought was given to the purchase of land to build a permanent HQ. Mrs Pauling of The Lodge was approached to sell one or two acres next to the Catholic Church. £15 was transferred from the General Fund to a Building Fund as a start.

By July 1931, with progress in raising funds with concerts, dances, whist drives, etc. at various venues around the Village and in Bookham, a decision was made to pay a £20 deposit on just under one acre of land next to the R. C. Church, while still distributing relief and assisting with housing, employment and pension problems.

Armistice dinners were held and Remembrance Day Services were attended. In some years parades were held in the morning at Great Bookham, in the afternoon at Little Bookham and in the evening at Effingham. Competitions were held with other local branches, such as in darts, etc. Members attended Standard Dedications at other branches, travelling to them by bus and train – some on the south coast and on the Isle of Wight – with expenses paid for by the Branch for Standard Bearers and Escorts.

The provision of a permanent HQ was still a priority, with other possibilities considered such as leasing the W I Hall and another land site offered but later withdrawn. Small sums were transferred to the Building Fund from time to time.

Finally, in June 1933 negotiations with the Pauling Trust were opened for half an acre of land next to the R C Church for £100. On 14th December of that year the conveyance was signed by the Trustees. During the time since the idea of an HQ started, various plans had been considered, with estimates from builders or local labour to build a 60-foot building with a bar, Committee Room and toilets, later extended by 10 feet. Estimates ranged from £300 to £450. After due consideration it was decided to employ local labour on a £300 estimate. Mr Wells was employed at a wage of £3.15s per week to oversee the construction. A lot of volunteer labour was used and other help was also given in the form of free hardcore, the loan of a shed, a second-hand fence and a piano.

By the end of February [1934], with work progressing, a stop was called: the project had run out of funds. The estimated cost of finishing the building included £100 for the roof and a further £200; to make matters worse a verbal offer of [a donation of] £25 was withdrawn. Mr Mallaby Deeley said his father wished to donate [money for] the roof to the memory of his wife, and his offer was gratefully accepted.

A loan was raised for £225, which was accepted; work restarted. Mr Wells had to give up but his son would continue at 1s 6d per hour. In April it was proposed to finish the work within two months.

In May 1934, owing to the number of Bookham residents joining the Branch, the name was changed to Effingham & The Bookhams. At the Club meeting it was agreed that on completion an extension would be needed to accommodate the bar, which a member had offered to build. Another member offered the timber. Also needed was another loan of £200 to complete.

The first meeting of the Committee in the new hall was held on 13th July 1934. It was agreed to ask Mrs Greville to open the Club on 13th October 1934, with members to march from the Crown in Bookham, and The Bookham Band to be engaged. Extra chairs were hired from Bentalls for the opening.

Sadly, no records can be found until 1942. [This curious remark renders it uncertain as to the source of his preceding account.]

September 1942: membership was becoming a worry as so many members were serving. Wives knitted garments for the troops, using vouchers for coupon-free wool. The Committee was informed that these were no longer available.

To ease the welfare situation, members' wives were appointed to serve on the Benevolent Committee, including Lady Mallaby Deeley, wife of the President. It was also noted with concern that the number of local service personnel reported missing was rising.

Later that year a donation from the War Savings Campaign of £25 for the Bookhams section of the Branch was received and welcomed.

September 1943: a new flag pole was erected by members of the Branch, having been conveyed from Bookham Station on a horse and cart loaned by Mr Mizen.

1944: the Branch continued to attract new applicants for membership; each one's eligibility was checked before membership was granted. The Benevolent Committee continued to distribute relief, advice and assistance where necessary, assisted by donations from fund-raising efforts such as Wings for Victory and a £50 donation from Salute the Soldiers Week – £10 of this was donated to S S A F A [Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association].

During this time the Branch was carrying out maintenance on the building with occasional assistance from the Club Committee.

In January 1945 the Home Guard asked for the use of land at the rear of the Club to construct a miniature rifle range; this was agreed. About this time, it appears, a loan was raised from H & G Simmonds, Brewers, to purchase an additional piece of land from F & G Mizen.

In January 1946 the President, Sir [Guy] Meyrick Mallaby Deeley, who had done so much for the Branch and Club, passed away. Later that year Mr Muggeridge resigned. He had been involved with the Branch from the very early days and had served as Secretary for many years. His wife also resigned from the Benevolent Committee. Both resigned for reasons of age and health. About the same time, Lady Wadia was also lost from the Benevolent Committee.

Annual insurance increased from £2 to £3 for £3,000 cover.

November 1946: 10 guineas was donated to the Parish Welfare Home Fund. Members assisted with the distribution of Xmas parcels to the elderly. £4 10s 0d was allocated for the needy at Xmas and £1 10s 0d was given to three members.

June 1947: it was proposed to transfer the Trusteeship of the Branch to Legion HQ as one trustee had died and another, Chairman Capt McGowan, was leaving the district. This was finally done in June 1948, by a motion carried with 14 for and 13 against at a Special General Meeting. It was also proposed that a proper lease be drawn up between Branch and Club instead of the existing verbal one; a draft lease was drawn up and agreed.

January 1948: a memorial to the fallen was proposed by various organisations. (A Memorial Tablet was finally unveiled by Mr A Poland on August 15th 1954 with a full Church and a strong Legion presence; the Legion's share of the cost was £18 6s 6d.)

In September 1948 a Joint Building Committee and a fund were set up for a proposed extension to the building. Although plans were drawn up and tenders received, by September 1949 the programme had been postponed through lack of funds, and falling membership made the financial future unsure.

July 1951: the Legion participates in Village celebrations for the Festival of Britain. The situation by then had improved and the Club requested permission to extend the building on the west side to accommodate the billiard table. It appears that by this time the lease to the Club included all repairs and improvements.

November 1951: the Legion affiliation fee increased to 2s, leaving the Branch with only 6d. It was proposed to increase subs to 3s.

February 1952: the flag pole was brought down by the wind.

By the end of March 1953 the Secretary had found a flag pole of about 25 feet, for a cost of 10d per foot. There is no record of it being erected or by whom.

July 1954: the Rifle Club requested to pay a subscription for the use of the land at the rear of the Club, which was granted.

September 1955: The Vicar of Effingham had suggested that a table be placed below the Memorial Tablet in the Church, to place flowers on. The Branch Committee voted a donation of 5 guineas to start the collection.

March 1956: the formation of a Women's Section, previously proposed, was again discussed. By April 1957 the Women's Section had been formed and was requesting more Club time. They were granted one evening a month (a good move by the Club as they have been a great asset – they now hold two meetings a month and are very active in the County, also supportive of Club and Branch activities).

The Branch continued to dispense relief and to assist where possible with housing and financial problems, raising funds with jumble sales and dances. The Club Committee continued to seek a loan for the extension.

September 1959: the Legion increased the affiliation fee to 3s. It was proposed to increase Branch subs from 3s 6d to 4s 6d. It was also agreed, as last year, to give the ladies of the Women's Section a dinner, a tradition that is continued to this day.

December 1961: The flag pole broke in half and once again was replaced. It is still in use today, having been shortened once and painted a number of times.

I hope this trawl through the old Minute Books has been of some interest and explains a bit about the early days and history of a Royal British Legion Branch, and the struggle to get their own Headquarters while carrying out support and welfare to ex-service personnel where and when needed.

The Royal Warrant was granted in 1971 to the Legion which now became the Royal British Legion.

The Club is now the social side of the Legion and supports the Branch in its work, which continues, although there are fewer ex-servicemen and women involved. They are ably supported by non-service members known as associate members, for now. Next year all members will be known as 'Members'.

We will continue to serve all the time there is a need; and there will always be a need.

APPENDIX II

Conveyance of the site for the Branch from Mrs Pauling to the Branch Trustees in 1933

This Conveyance is made the twenty ninth day of December One thousand nine hundred and thirty three between Dolores Pauling of The Prebendal Thame in the County of Oxford Married Woman (hereinafter called "the Vendor") of the first part the said Dolores Pauling John Scott of 26 Victoria Street in the City of Westminster Esquire and The Public Trustee (hereinafter called "the Trustees") of the second part and Guy Meyrick Mallaby Mallaby-Deeley of Slater's Oak Effingham in the County of Surrey Esquire Geoffrey Illingworth of High Barn Effingham aforesaid Barrister at Law Frank Aubrey Bishop of Badulla Forrest Road Effingham Junction in the said County of Surrey clerk (as Trustees for the Effingham and District Branch of the British Legion and hereinafter together called "the Purchasers") of the third part

Whereas by an Indenture of Conveyance dated the fifteenth day of October One thousand nine hundred and seven between Henry Court Willock Pollen of the one part and George Craig Saunders Pauling (herein described as George Pauling) of the other part the plot of land hereinafter described and intended to be hereby conveyed was (with other land) conveyed to the said George Craig Saunders Pauling in fee simple

And whereas the said George Craig Saunders Pauling by his Will dated the eighteenth day of April One Thousand nine hundred and sixteen appointed the Trustees, Executors and Trustees thereof and devised the Lodge Estate (which included the land hereby conveyed) unto his Trustees upon the trusts therein mentioned

And whereas the said George Craig Saunders Pauling died on the tenth day of February One thousand nine hundred and nineteen and his said Will was duly proved on the twenty eighth day of May One thousand nine hundred and nineteen in the Principal Probate Registry by all the Executors therein named

And whereas by virtue of the Law of Property Act 1925 and the Settled Land Act 1925 the land hereby conveyed became in the first day of January One thousand nine hundred and twenty six vested in the Vendor in fee simple at law

And whereas by a Vesting Deed dated the twenty ninth day of March One thousand nine hundred and twenty eight and made between the Trustees of the one part and the Vendor of the other part the Trustees declared that the lands therein mentioned (which included the land hereby conveyed) were vested in the Vendor in fee simple upon the trusts and subject to the powers and provisions contained in the said Will and further declared that the Trustees were the Trustees of the Settlement created by the said Will for the purposes of the Settled Land Act 1925

And whereas the Vendor in exercise of the power in this behalf conferred on her by the Settled Land Act 1925 has agreed to sell the fee simple in possession of the said land subject to the restrictive and other covenants hereinafter mentioned to the Purchasers at the price of One Hundred Pounds

Now this Deed witnesseth as follows

1. In consideration of the sum of **One hundred pounds** paid by the Purchasers by the direction of the Vendor to the Trustees as aforesaid (the receipt whereof the Trustees hereby acknowledge) the Vendor **as Trustee** in exercise of the power conferred upon her by the Settled Land Act 1925 and of every other power enabling her hereby conveys unto the Purchasers **All that** piece or parcel of land extending to .362 of an acre or thereabouts in the Parish of Effingham in the County of Surrey and being portion of Field No. 218 on the Ordnance Survey Map of the said Parish and for the purposes of identification but not of limitation delineated on the plan hereto annexed and shown coloured pink **To hold** the same **unto** the Purchasers in fee simple as joint Tenants subject to the restrictive and other covenants hereinafter mentioned and upon the trusts and subject to the powers and provisions hereinafter declared

2. The Purchasers to the intent that this covenant shall be for the benefit of the land coloured blue on the said plan and shall be binding on the owner or owners for the time being of the land hereby conveyed but on the Purchasers only so long as they are the owners of the said land hereby conveyed hereby **covenant** with the Vendor that they the Purchasers and their successors in title will at all times hereafter observe and perform the restrictive covenants and conditions set forth in the First Schedule hereto

3. The Purchasers hereby **covenant** with the Vendor that they will forthwith erect a stockproof fence on the Eastern side of the land being conveyed and (if necessary in the opinion of the Vendor) on the North side thereof and will at all times hereafter properly maintain proper and stockproof fences on the said Eastern and Northern boundaries

4. The Purchasers hereby indemnify the Vendor and her successors in title from and against Tithe of Sixpence per annum and Land Tax of Twopence per annum in respect of the land hereby conveyed

5. The Purchasers and the Trustees from time to time of the Effingham and District Branch of the British Legion (hereinafter called "the Branch Trustees") shall (Subject to the said restrictive and other covenants) hold the said land and the Legion Hall and other building intended to be erected thereon upon the trusts set out in the Second Schedule hereto

6. The Vendor hereby acknowledges the right of the Purchasers to production of the documents specified in the Third Schedule hereto and to delivery of copies thereof **And** the Trustee hereby acknowledges the right of the Purchasers to production and delivery of copies of the Probate of the Will of the said George Craig Saunders Pauling

7. It is hereby certified that the transaction hereby effected does not form part of a larger transaction or a series of transactions in respect of which the consideration or the aggregate consideration exceed Five hundred pounds

In Witness whereof the Public Trustee has caused his Official Seal to be hereunto affixed and the other parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first before written

The First Schedule above referred to

1. Only a British Legion or other Hall (and outbuildings) in accordance with plans duly approved by the Vendor shall be erected on the said land

2. The Purchasers and their successors in title will not cause or permit to be caused on the premises any nuisance or annoyance or disturbance which may annoy or disturb the Vendor or her tenants or the owners of the adjoining premises or the neighbourhood

The Second Schedule above referred to

1. To permit the said land and premises to be used in perpetuity as a non-sectarian and non-political place of recreation and social intercourse under the name of the Effingham and District Branch of the British Legion for the advantage or benefit of ex-Service men from time to time resident in the Parishes of Effingham, Great Bookham and Little Bookham and either gratuitously or in consideration of any money payment or on such terms (including if thought fit that such ex-Service men shall be members of the Effingham and District Branch of the British Legion) as the Branch Trustees may think fit

2. To permit the said land and premises or any part or parts thereof to be used for any proper purpose of which the Branch Trustees may from time to time approve but no preference shall be shown to any particular denomination or sect or political body

3. From time to time permit new or additional buildings to be erected on the said land and to permit any buildings for the time being standing on the said land to be repaired altered enlarged or taken down and rebuilt if necessary so to adapt the said premises or render any buildings for the time being standing thereon better adapted for the purposes aforesaid

4. If at any time the said land or premises or any part thereof shall in the opinion of the Branch Trustees become unsuitable or unnecessary for the purposes aforesaid or if the said Legion Hall cannot be maintained or if the same shall cease to be used or of use for the purposes aforesaid the Branch Trustees may sell the said land and premises or any part or parts thereof at such times and in such manner as the Branch Trustees shall in their absolute discretion think fit

5. The Branch Trustees shall hold the proceeds of such sale or sales whether under the power hereinbefore contained or any statutory or other power after payment thereof of the expenses incident thereto **Upon trust** to apply the same in the purchase of other premises to be used for the like purposes or in the improvement of any premises used or to be used for the purposes aforesaid or to apply the same as capital or income for such charitable purposes and objects and in such manner for the benefit of ex-Service men from time to time resident in the said Parishes of Effingham Great Bookham and Little Bookham as the Branch Trustees shall in their absolute discretion think fit with power to the Branch Trustees to settle any scheme or schemes for such last mentioned application

Provided always that if the trusts last aforesaid shall fail by reason of there ceasing to be any ex-Service men for the time being resident in the said Parishes or for other proper reason the trusts last aforesaid ought not to be given effect to then and in that case the Branch Trustees shall hold such proceeds as capital or income for the benefit of the inhabitants of all or any of the Parishes of Effingham, Great Bookham and Little Bookham in such manner as the Branch Trustees shall direct or appoint

6. Upon any sale by the Branch Trustees the Purchaser or Purchasers dealing bona fide with the Branch Trustees shall not be concerned to see or inquire whether the occasion for executing or exercising such power has arisen nor shall the Purchaser or Purchasers be concerned to see to the application of the purchase money

7. The management and control of the said land and premises and affairs of the said trust shall be vested in the Branch Trustees

8. The power of appointing new or additional Trustees of the said land and premises shall be vested in the members of the Effingham and District Branch of the British Legion in General Meeting

The Third Schedule above referred to

Date of Deed	Parties	Nature of Deed
15 th October 1907	Henry Court Willock-Pollen (1) George Pauling (2)	Conveyance
19 th January 1926	Dolores Pauling	Deed Poll
24 th November 1927	Dolores Pauling (1) B R Heaton (2)	Office Copy Power of Attorney
29 th March 1928	Dolores Pauling and John Scott and The Public Trustee (1) Dolores Pauling (2)	Vesting Deed

Signed sealed and delivered
by the said Dolores Pauling in
the presence of

[signature of Dolores Pauling]

[signatures of witnesses]

Signed sealed and delivered
by the said John Scott in
the presence of

[no signature]

[signatures of witnesses]

Sealed with the Official Seal
of The Public Trustee in the
presence of

[signature and seal for The Public Trustee]

[signatures of witnesses]

Signed sealed and delivered
by the said Guy Meyrick Mallaby
Mallaby-Deeley in the presence of

[signature of Guy Meyrick Mallaby Mallaby-Deeley]

[signatures of witnesses]

Signed sealed and delivered
by the said Geoffrey Illingworth
in the presence of

[signature of Geoffrey Illingworth]

[signatures of witnesses]

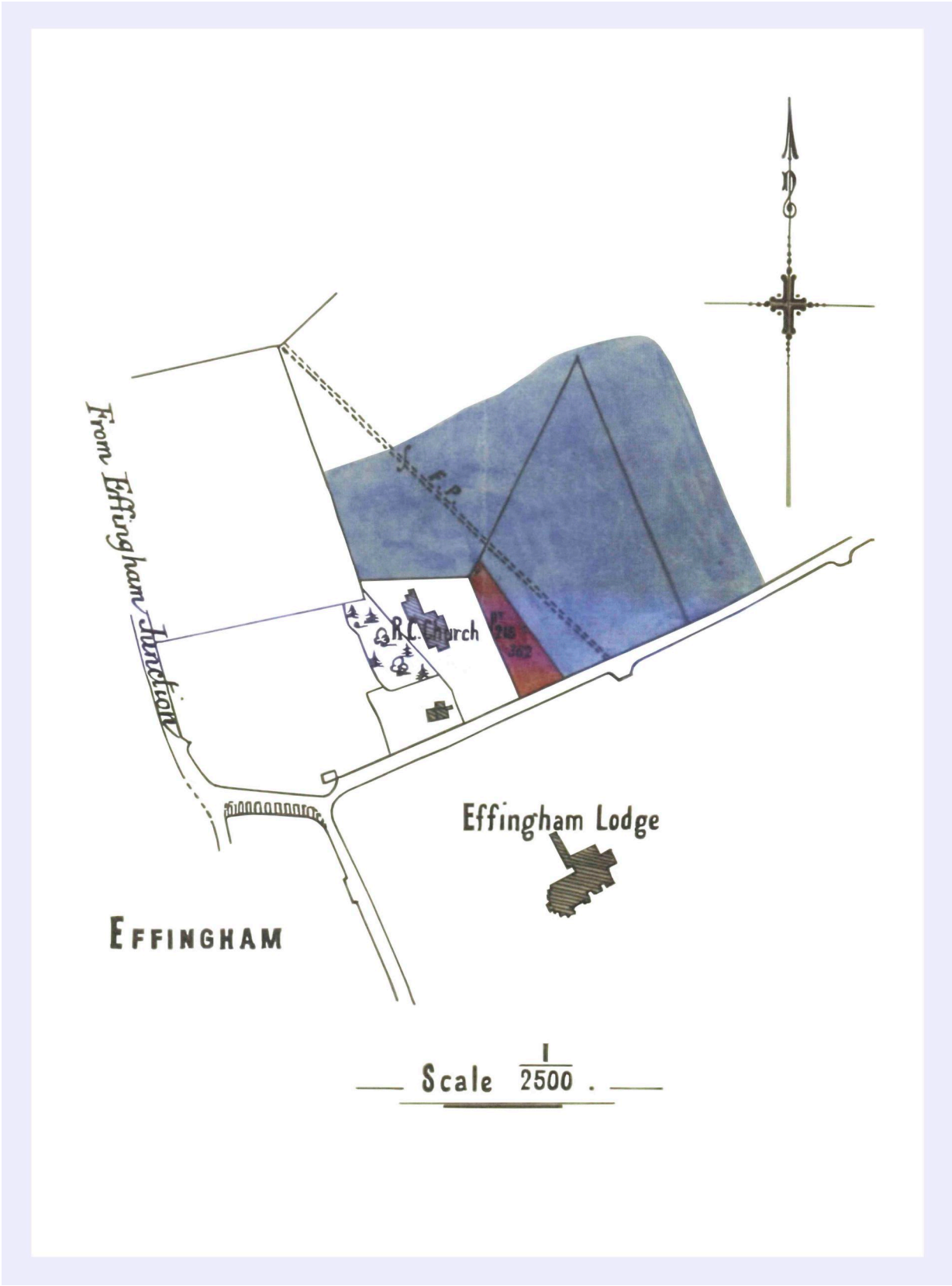
Signed sealed and delivered
by the said Frank Aubrey Bishop
in the presence of

[signature of Frank Aubrey Bishop]

[signatures of witnesses]

Recorded in the books of the Charity Commissioners
for England and Wales pursuant to the provisions
of Section 20 (4) of the Settled Land Act 1925.

[stamped with date 21st July 1939]



APPENDIX III

*Opening of the Branch Headquarters on 13 October 1934*Article in *The Surrey Advertiser and County Times*, 20 October 1934

LEGION HEADQUARTERS OPENED

INTERESTING CEREMONY AT EFFINGHAM

COUNTY CHAIRMAN AND GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT

Erected at a cost of £588, the new club of the Effingham branch of the British Legion was formally opened on Saturday by Major G. E. Cohen, chairman of the Surrey council of the Legion. After unlocking and knocking on the door, Major Cohen declared the building open with the words:

"The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month there was peace. Ye who enter here enter with peaceful hearts."

The Effingham branch will hold its various functions, in the new hall, which has been erected by direct labour. The members of the branch, numbering about 140, are drawn from Effingham, Great Bookham and Little Bookham.

The legionaires, in company with members of the Leatherhead, Horsley, Dorking and Sutton branches, paraded at the Crown cross-roads, Great Bookham, and marched to the new club headed by the band of the Sutton branch. The Effingham standard bearer was Mr. A. J. Poland, and Mr. F. Branch and Mr. H. J. Sparks acted as escorts. Following the opening of the door speeches were made, the hall being crowded by about 200 people. The chairman of the Effingham branch, Captain F. J. Searle presided and was supported by Mr. G. M. M. Mallaby-Deeley (president), Admiral Yelverton (patron), Major G. E. Cohen, the Rev. H. A. Floud (hon. chaplain), Mr. A. W. Carter (treasurer), Mr. F. A. Bishop (hon. secretary), and Mr. W. A. Muggeridge (publicity agent).

At the request of the chairman those present stood in silence in memory of fallen comrades.

Mr. G. M. M. Mallaby-Deeley introduced Major Cohen who, he said, had always been keenly interested in the Effingham branch because he was one of the original members. Captain Johnson, the county secretary was also an original member of the branch.

SPIRIT OF COMRADESHIP

Major Cohen said it was a very important day in the history of the Legion. In the early days of the Legion in Surrey the policy was to put out little bands of stalwarts in all parts of the county with the idea that when the districts became more closely associated branches of the Legion would arise. He was at the first meeting at Effingham in Captain Searle's house, when there were seven people present. Eventually a branch was formed, and how wise that policy was could be seen in that beautiful hall, which was a credit to the designer, Mr. H. W. Ford, and to the builders.

Such a building could not have been provided without a spirit of comradeship among the men of that part of the county. In years to come clubs like that would be memorials, and children would be told that they were built by men who remembered the wonderful comradeship they found in stress and danger. They were handing on to the next generation something that in spite of what politicians and other people had said, was worthy of our nation and Empire—patriotism and pride of country and Empire. He hoped that every man who could, and was allowed by his war service to do so, would feel it was his bounden duty to join the branch.

Continuing, Major Cohen said this year had been the most successful in the history of the Legion. Last year, on Remembrance Day, £23,700 was collected in Surrey, which worked out at about 5½d. per head. The affiliation fees of the county this year are higher than ever, showing that whatever anyone might say, the Legion was not dying. This year their affiliation fees placed Surrey at the top of England with £960 10s., an increase of £44 19s. on the previous year. They must not stop at that. Nobody in our time would know what the Legion had done for the country. History would tell that story.

SUCCESS OF THE LEGION

Admiral Yelverton, proposing a vote of thanks to Major Cohen, said the British Legion had been one of the greatest successes of the whole world. It was an example of what comradeship on the sea, in the air, and in the trenches, could do.

Captain Searle then described how the new building had arisen through the energies of the members of the branch which typified the spirit of the Legion.

Tea was served following the opening ceremony.

The arrangements were made by the

officers of the branch assisted by the following members of the committee: Messrs. E. F. Love, F. Wakefield, J. Lamberth, R. Kimball, Poulter, S. Armstrong, Murrell, Muggeridge, F. Branch, F. Wellings, A. J. Ashford and J. Pollard.

Wives and daughters of the members responsible for the catering were: Mrs. Searle, Mrs. Dearling, Mrs. Poulter, Mrs. W. Strudwick, Mrs. J. Lamberth, Mrs. W. A. Muggeridge, Mrs. Marsey, Miss Dearling and Miss Poulter. Mr. W. Dearling is the steward of the club.

APPENDIX IV

Newspaper articles from the British Newspaper Archive consulted for the years 1931-46

SACT – *The Surrey Advertiser and County Times*
SMCP – *Surrey Mirror and Country Post*
DLA – *Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser*

24 January 1931	SACT	page 10
21 March 1931	SACT	page 11
11 April 1931	SACT	page 7
6 February 1932	SACT	page 11
21 May 1932	SACT	page 10
21 January 1933	SACT	page 11
10 June 1933	SACT	page 10
14 October 1933	SACT	page 9
26 May 1934	SACT	page 8
14 July 1934	SACT	page 9
21 September 1934	SMCP	page 10
6 October 1934	SACT	page 11
20 October 1934	SACT	page 4
17 November 1934	SACT	page 10
15 June 1935	SACT	page 12
20 February 1937	SACT	page 11
15 May 1937	SACT	page 15
19 June 1937	SACT	page 12
20 November 1937	SACT	page 15
22 January 1938	SACT	page 15
4 March 1939	SACT	page 20
14 July 1939	DLA	page 12
14 December 1946	SACT	page 6

APPENDIX V

Dedication of the new Standard in 1989 – additional photographs



Figure 45 Oatlands Park Pipe and Drum Band leading the parade after the service at St Lawrence Church.



Figure 46 Branch members turning from Crossways into the Street, *en route* to their headquarters in Lower Road.



Figure 47 Arrival in Lower Road, passing the turning (at left) into Church Street.



Figure 48 Standing to attention at the headquarters.



Figure 49 Lord Auckland (President of the Surrey Legion) with Elizabeth Cobbett (Mayor of Guildford).



Figure 50 Pipes and Drums homeward bound, after duty done.