



**June/July 2022**

I hope you all enjoyed the celebrations, and the good weather (mostly) over the Jubilee. Many thanks to Pearl and John who had an RBL stall at events at Dickleburgh and Long Stratton over the Jubilee holiday, and raised over £150 for the Poppy Appeal, as well as spreading the word about the RBL and our Branch in particular. We held a short commemoration for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of Falklands War on 14 June, but Norman will also focus on the Falklands at the service for Armed Forces Day on 25 June, with the early start of 9.30am. Please do join us.

I apologise to Jenny Jenkins for mistakenly calling her Jenny Jones in recent newsletters, and (on behalf of Norman) to those who received last month's newsletter a little late, and possibly a little battered. I'm sure he's not the first to put something on the roof of the car while loading up and then drive off! Thanks to Norman for his contributions to this issue.

**A Message from our Chairman**

Pearl and I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying this fine weather. We also hope that you have not contracted Covid which seems to be rife again especially in our area. I have been offered a Spring vaccination which I am having Thursday morning, I was a little surprised, but I will have anything that helps.

As Rosemary mentioned in her editorial, we attended the Jubilee celebrations at both Dickleburgh and Long Stratton; my sincere thanks to Rosemary for helping out on Friday and to Pearl for helping on both days. By the time we packed up on Saturday we had got the hang of how the new gazebo works!

I feel it was a worthwhile exercise to put ourselves on show and to let the public know what we can do to help. We had offers of cake-making for Bun, Cuppa and Chat and the daughter of a veteran who lives in Shottesham asked if we could contact her father. It transpired that he is a Loddon member and Colin, the Loddon Chairman, has been in contact with him since my call. We also met up with a former branch member who may join our Bun, Cuppa and Chat group. The new banners looked really good – eye-catching and professional.

The badges, wrist bands, T-shirts, pens, rulers and so forth proved popular, raising a good amount for the Poppy Fund.

Please make the effort to attend our branch meetings if you can, and we look forward to seeing our Bun, Cuppa and Chat group this coming Thursday.

**Best wishes, John**



**John and Pearl at Long Stratton on 4 June 2022**



**Revd Norman Steer with our President, William Hawkins, at the laying of a wreath to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War, 14 June 2022**

## A Queen's Scout at the Queen's Coronation Norman Steer

My day at the Coronation started on the 28 May 1953 at 7am reporting to Lancaster Gate, having been fortunate enough to have been chosen as one of forty scouts to be a Queen's Messenger for the coronation. Groups of five were allocated to eight hotels in London.



'All the Queen's Scouts' reporting for duty, Lancaster Gate, *Evening News*, 28 May 1953

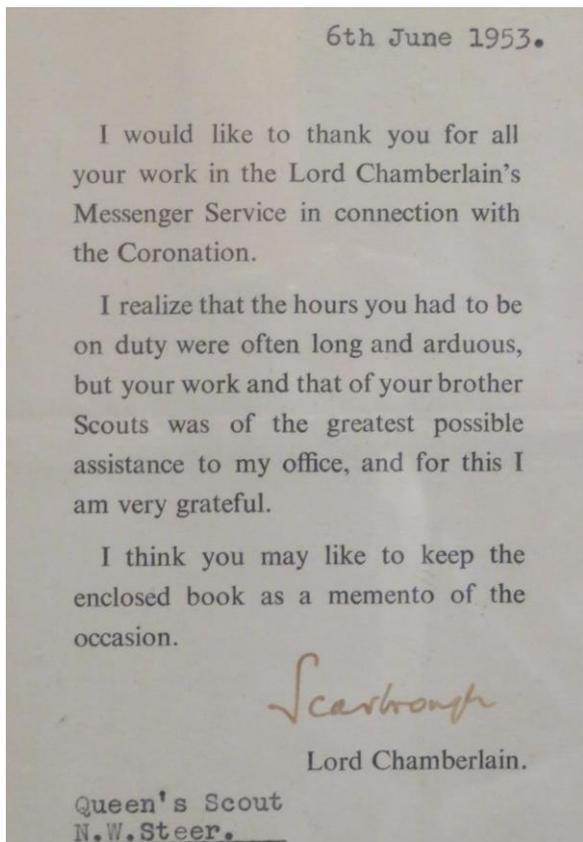
With uniform pressed, shoes polished and wearing the Queen's arm band together with a pass to show my *bone fides* as a Lord Chamberlain's Messenger for the Queen, we then reported to our allocated hotel from which to operate the service - ours was the Rembrandt Hotel. Five of us had an area covering fifteen embassies which included Hong Kong, Canada, Tonga, Zanzibar, Ceylon, Qatar and Saudi Arabia as well, of course, covering Buckingham Palace. Also staying at our hotel were the delegations from the Seychelles and Bahrain.

Our day started at 7am, breakfast was brought to our room organised by Emille who looked after us extremely well.

Our room was just off the main corridor and our bedrolls were around the wall with a large table in the centre for eating, and five armchairs so we could read, talk or listen to the radio (though no TV!). We had so much to say, so much to look forward to, and were so tired when we finished at 6pm.



PATROL Leader Gerald Warrington and Scouts Norman Steer and Alfred Sargent, of Guildford, who were among the 40 Scouts chosen to act as Queen's messengers during the Coronation. (Brunsdon Rapkins)



At 8am on the dot, a courier from the Lord Chamberlain's department came with a bag of letters, cards and bags all addressed for us to deliver to the embassies' hotels or Buckingham Palace. Security was very strict, and everything was checked at Lancaster House before it came to us for delivery. We normally took our deliveries from an arm attached to a suited man, but on one occasion the Japanese ambassador insisted on meeting with me as he wanted to see the messenger and give his personal thanks. This was exciting for me. Deliveries to Buckingham Palace were also different; we were welcomed into an office and enjoyed the thrill of entering the Palace (no Queen though).

Emille made sure we had lunch supplied, usually a cold collation and sandwiches which we ate as time permitted, and our evening meal was taken at 7pm after our day's work, following a shower. Riding our bikes was surprisingly easy; our destinations were never very far away, and the police knew all about us and eased the traffic which was very slow with all the barriers being erected in readiness for the great day. And there were also soldiers marching and the Guards on horseback to negotiate.

After dinner, we liked to go for a walk to see people gathering for the great day and to hear the singing and some playing guitars. It was a jolly time; everyone was happy and spoke to us, and we felt very privileged to be present in London on such an occasion.

On the day of the Coronation, we walked to Westminster Abbey to get there by 8am, escorted by a member of the Lord Chamberlain's office. We lined up either side of the main doors, so we were able to see who went in. It really was something to see, though we did not know who everyone was, but the colourful dresses and uniforms were an incredible kaleidoscope of colour and excitement. I only got to realise exactly what was happening long after the event when I was much older and, watching the televised version of the Coronation, I could point out my bare knees as the television panned across a line of Queen's Scouts!

At the end of the service, we were given umbrellas to hold over the heads of the dignitaries leaving the Abbey to get into the waiting carriages as it was pouring with rain. Our job was to keep them dry from the Abbey doors to the open carriage door. One of my charges was Queen Salote Tupou III of Tonga. What a large and tall lady. My arm holding the umbrella for her was held as high as I could keep it. Queen Salote bent down to get under it but couldn't. She took my brolly and held it herself, saying "Follow me and I will give it back when we get to the carriage".



She smiled at me as we walked together and, as promised, she handed the umbrella back to me and gave me a wink and a smile as I turned to go back for the next person. I can remember this so clearly and I can see her now smiling as she waved to me from her open carriage with the rain pouring relentlessly upon her. She has always been my idol ever since. I never got to Tonga to see her, much to my sadness.

Before we left for home, we were treated to a dinner at Lancaster Gate where we were thanked and given two keepsakes – the booklet 'Memorandum for Gentlemen in Attendance on Foreign Princes and Representatives' and a small book listing all those who attended the Coronation as guests of the Queen – members of the Royal Family, Commonwealth rulers and leaders and foreign dignitaries, showing where they were staying in London. We said goodbye to Emille from the Rembrandt Hotel, and he had tears in his eyes as he said he would miss us. It was an amazing experience for a 17-year-old Queen's Scout - from being selected, our work in London leading up to the Coronation, and the day itself. I feel so privileged the older I get and realise the enormity of the occasion.

As a postscript to the story of my encounter with Queen Salote nearly 70 years ago, I was pleased to see that she was the subject of letters to *The Times* in June this year, including one who said the reason she refused to have the hood on her carriage raised in the heavy rain (the only dignitary who did so) was that she had seen the Queen of England's people stand around for hours in their best clothes getting soaked, and felt that as a Queen herself, she should respond appropriately.' She was also determined that her subjects should be educated properly, with young people being sent to Fiji for further education and many going on to university in New Zealand. The letter ends, 'At 6ft 3in, she was a giant in more ways than one.' No wonder I couldn't reach high enough to hold an umbrella above her head!

### **RBL Dickleburgh Branch Family News**

It is with great sadness that we learned recently of the deaths of Joe Fox and Roy Buttle. Joe was a regular at Bun, Cuppa and Chat, and his wife Terri was very involved in the Dickleburgh Women's Section branch until it closed in 2016. They moved into a residential home a few years ago because of ill-health. Roy was the husband of Margaret and the son-in-law of 'Billy' Copeman, one of our Normandy veterans who passed away some years ago. Many members of the branch will have fond memories of Margaret and Roy's trips to the cemeteries and battlefields in France and Belgium, meticulously planned and organised, and full of moving visits to memorials and museums, but leaving plenty of time for retail therapy and food! On our first trip to the Western Front with Margaret and Roy, Joe and I laid the wreath at the 'Plugstreet' Memorial together. A celebration of Roy's life will take place at Haughley Church, Suffolk on 25 June at 3pm, with guests requested to wear bright clothing, not black. I will pass on details of Joe's funeral when known. Our thoughts are with Terri and Margaret and their families and friends.

## Norman's Chuckle Corner

- ✚ A pool lifeguard asks a mother to scold her son for urinating in the public pool. "It's perfectly natural," the mother says "for young children to urinate in the pool, plenty of children at this pool do it. I don't see it as a big deal." The lifeguard takes off his sunglasses and replies, "Well, none of the other kids are doing it from the top of the diving board."
- ✚ A Sunday school teacher asks her class "Where does God live?" A girl shot up her hand. "In our bathroom, Miss." "In your bathroom?", says the bewildered teacher, "Why do you think God lives in your bathroom?" "Well, every morning Daddy shouts outside the bathroom door, "Good God, are you still in there?"
- ✚ A woman is having lunch in a Norwich pub when a man approaches her table, "Excuse me," says the man, "My wife and I are visitors to Norfolk, and she noticed your sandals. She wanted me to come over and ask if you bought those sandals around here?" "Actually," replied the woman, "I got them in a shop just around the corner from this pub." "Fantastic," said the man "May I ask you how much you paid for them?" "No problem" says the woman "They were made in France and cost £100." "Thank you," says the man and when he gets back to his table he says to his wife, "She got them in Paris."
- ✚ A couple went Christmas shopping. The shopping centre was packed, and after a while the woman realised that her husband was not with her. She looked around but still no sign of him, so rang him on her mobile and asked where he was. He replied, "Do you remember the jeweller's we went into five years ago where you fell in love with a diamond ring that we could not afford, and I told you that I would get it for you one day?" Hearing this the wife was choked up and started to cry, "Yes" she said, "I've never forgotten it, how wonderful you have remembered." He replied "Well, I am in the pub next door."

## Dates for your diary

*Please note the new time for branch meetings and the new venue and day for Bun, Cuppa and Chat*

**Armed Forces Day service**, commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands War, Saturday 25 June, 9.30am, Dickleburgh War Memorial

**Branch meetings** - Wednesday 22 June, and Wednesday 27 July, 7.30pm, Village Centre

**Bun, Cuppa and Chat** - Thursday 23 June and Thursday 28 July, 2.30-4pm, Village Centre

**Simonds Coach Trip to the National Arboretum** - 25 September 2022, £36, Contact Simonds directly: to book: <https://www.simonds.co.uk/home> or 01379 647300

**Norfolk Assistance Scheme**  

**Are you an older person worried about rising fuel and food prices?**

**Norfolk Assistance Scheme** is working in partnership with Age UK Norfolk and Age UK Norwich to help you get support and financial assistance for food, energy, water and other essentials including white goods and beds.

Anyone can apply to NAS on your behalf including our Age UK partners if you are not able to contact us yourself. NAS, Age UK Norfolk and Age UK Norwich are here to help you through this difficult time.

The fastest way to apply is online: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/NAS](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/NAS)  
If you do not have internet access, call 0333 996 8333

If you are unsure whether this is for you please contact: **Your Norfolk Advice Line**  
Tel: 0333 996 8333 or by email at [helpline@ncan.co.uk](mailto:helpline@ncan.co.uk)

**The Norfolk Assistance Scheme is open to anyone living in Norfolk (not just service veterans) who is struggling financially during these difficult times. The details above relate particularly to their partnership with Age UK to help older people, but the scheme applies equally to younger people.**

**For our RBL Family, please remember that Norman is also available to help or signpost. Tel. 01379 854245**

**Contributions or comments, please, to the Editor, Rosemary Steer, tel.: 01379 854245; email: [rosemary@steerfamily.plus.com](mailto:rosemary@steerfamily.plus.com)**

*If you have received this Newsletter, but are not involved with the Royal British Legion, don't worry, we just wanted to spread a little fun and humour around! Please contact me, though, if you would like your name removed from the mailing list.*