3542 The Riders Newsletter

Issue 2

In this issue;

- Competitions, Quizzes and Humour!
- The Blue Light Hub, a fantastic organisation in Milton Keynes.
- RBL Membership Facebook Group Goes Live.
- Artificial Intelligence. Can it be useful to the Riders Branch?
- Regional and County Updates.

The Riders Branch National AGM

The Royal British Legion Riders Branch Annual General Meeting is officially confirmed for Saturday, 14th November, at the Oldbury RBL Club. Doors will open at 11:00 AM, with the proceedings starting promptly at 1:00 PM (13:00). Please note that this is a strictly members-only event, and membership cards will be checked at the door—ensure you have yours with you to gain entry.

The AGM is the heartbeat of our branch; it is the primary time of year where we can come together as a national body to review our progress, share our vision, and ensure that every corner of the country is represented. Your presence provides the feedback and collective energy that drives the branch forward.

Beyond the formal agenda, this day is a celebration of our people. A highlight of the AGM is the presentation of awards recognising members who have gone above and beyond with outstanding achievements throughout the year.

This is also one of the best opportunities of the year to meet friends from across the country, put faces to names you've seen on the forum, and swap stories from the riding season.

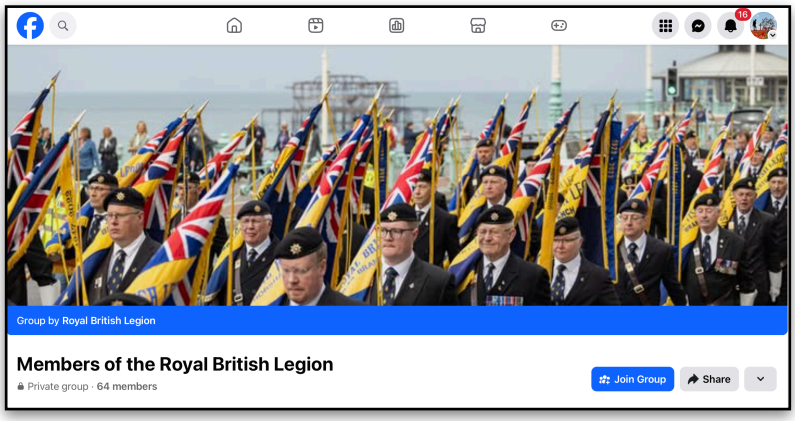
So whether you are travelling from nearby or from further afield, we look forward to seeing you at Oldbury for a great meeting and an even better night of socialising.

Coming up

Branch AGM
14 Nov 2026
Oldbury RBL club
Doors open 11:00 AGM start 13:00

Branch Birthday
27 Nov 2026

RBL Membership Facebook Group goes live!



The Royal British Legion have recently announced the launch of a new membership-exclusive Facebook group! The group has been created so that members can share their good news stories, share thoughts and ideas, and hear updates from RBL.

To join, you need to have a Facebook account. You'll be asked to verify your RBL membership and, once approved by admins, you're in! There are house rules, which you will see on joining but we hope that this will be a new and fun way for our members to connect with each other. Kindly note, questions about your membership should be send to membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

Find and join the group here or search on Facebook for *Members of the Royal British Legion*. You may share the link with other members. From July, we will begin sending out email invitations to members, in stages by region, to ensure that as many as possible have the opportunity to join.

See you in the group!

The Chairmans Voice

We are now approaching our National Rally in Cleethorpes, taking place from 24th to 26th July 2026. I recognise the considerable work the organisers have put in, so please get your tickets sorted before the gate price increases. Let's all enjoy a good time together, with a few drinks, plenty of laughs, and friends old and new. Remember: if we do not support events, they will eventually disappear.

Finally, now is the time to start considering nominations for the Branch AGM Awards. Please send in plenty of nomination forms so they can be discussed and voted on at the next Committee meeting in October 2026. (*See below*)

Stay cool and safe, and please keep an eye on those who are suffering from not only the heat but personal issues.

Branch Awards

A number of awards are given to the Branch members each year to reward those who provide exemplary service to the Branch. The Awards are:

The Andy Simmonds Shield: Andy was one of the early members of the Branch. In 2005, while he was still a serving WO2 in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, he very tragically died of a heart attack whilst out on a run. As he was the first, but sadly not the last to go from the Branch, we dedicate a memorial shield, awarded annually to the person the committee thinks has given more above and beyond for the Branch.

The Albie Hall Trophy is to be presented each year in Memory of John (Albie) Hall who passed away following a motorcycle accident. The award will go to the member who the Committee feels has captured the Public's imagination in his or her fundraising achievements for the Poppy Appeal during the year.

Branch Certificates Of Merit
The Branch Certificate Of Merit is awarded to members who fulfils at least one of three qualifying criteria.

The full details of the Awards and how to nominate a member for an award can be found on the branch forum. Go to Members Forum/Branch Documents/Policies, Guidance & Forms/RBLR Awards Process.PDF or email the branch secretary for more information. riders.secretary@rbl.community

Message from the Vice

Dear all,

I hope you are enjoying this perfect riding weather this summer and getting out and about together.... If not... why not? The Riders branch do some awesome work across the nation raising funds for the Poppy Appeal and with some now 130 events registered across the regions the BO's can certainly see this fantastic fund-raising effort!

However, it's important to remember why some joined The Riders Branch. It has also been noted that numbers of Riders attending these events have sometimes been on the decline, with County reps sometimes struggling to man the PA stands at events with just a few stalwarts who regularly show up - from a Branch of 4060 members!

If you are not up to going out on full day long distance rides anymore (as it is appreciated that some of us are a little older now than when we first started with the Riders) but still pay your membership to the Branch, then why not consider popping out for a short ride for the day to show your support on a stand at an event whilst soaking up the usual banter that ensues.... or...

For the more able riding members amongst us... It's important to remember too that quite a few of us joined the Riders for something different than just raising money for the Poppy Appeal.

The camaraderie from spending time with like-minded Riders from your area, or getting together with others from further a field.

You couldn't wish for a better opportunity weather wise! I was a little dis-heartened recently when I organised a ride out predominately for my local county but was open to the Region to attend with close to 500 registered Riders in the region.... I got four and two members from Norfolk met up with us at the destination.

This was just a small example of a wasted opportunity, but I know this is repeated now in various counties where once you'd find 15-20 Riders meeting up for a blast, brews, banter and the usual cake & ice-cream - these were some great times seeing some great roads and scenery and getting together with other members.

This needs to be an essential part of being in The Riders Branch and why we joined The Motorcycling Branch of The RBL. It's not just so you can wear a cut at The RTTW which has also been noted of late - some not even members of The Branch anymore!

So, let's get out there guys & gals... stop the no shows or apologies for not attending and let's get back to what made this branch so popular when we all first started..... riding & banter with a bit of fund raising in between.... There's an old phrase here... 'Use it or Lose it'. Counties start to wain and dwindle away with inactivity and lack of support and before you realise it, you won't have an operating county where you live as the Reps have just given up on constantly banging their heads against a brick wall when it comes to engagement from the local membership. Let your Rep know if you aren't getting the satisfaction from the Branch as you used to if that's your reason for not attending... but more importantly... why and how you can be an active part of the change to bring back positive engagement with your local/national events and rides out.

Ride - Have fun, stay safe and stay rubber-side down y'all 🙂

Kindest regards

AJ Wilcox

A rough-looking biker is riding down the road when his Harley breaks down. So he pulls over and, seeing a farm nearby, starts walking toward it, hoping for help. As he gets closer, he sees a sign on the fence:

"TALKING DOG FOR SALE - ONLY £10."

Thinking this must be a joke, he walks up to the farmer and says, "Can I see this talking dog?"

The farmer points to the back yard. The biker goes over and sees an old retriever sitting there. "Are you the talking dog?" the biker asks.

"Yes, that's me," the dog says.

The biker is floored. "What's your story?"

The dog replies, "Well, I was an undercover drug sniffer dog. I traveled all over Europe sniffing out drug lords . I even saved a politician's life once.

Then I retired and now my owner wants to sell me for ten pounds."

The biker runs back to the farmer. "That dog is incredible! Why are you only selling him for ten pounds?"

The farmer replies, "Because he's a liar. He never did any of that stuff."

Counting the Pennies

Our financial year runs from 1 July to 30th June so it is highly important that Reps ensure that any funds are banked prior to the year end of 30th June and any expenses have submitted. For the most part they were!

Following the July committee meeting, our Chairman has now officially signed off on the accounts within our Legion accounting system. The accounts are now with our auditor, who will be reviewing them and producing an audit report. This timeline ensures the audit is completed and returned to me well ahead of the 30th September submission deadline for Head Office.
Regarding the RBLR PAO account transition, I have made significant progress. Over the course of this new financial year, you will see deposits into this account dwindle as we move to using the main PA account exclusively, via your bank book or Post Office paying-in card. This is essential for us to comply with audit requirements by operating only one branch bank account.
Balances are based on the reconciliation of accounts 30th June 2026

GENERAL FUND	£ 5,423.88
PAO fundraising	£. 4,983.75
BFI.	£ 35,851.56
PA so far - October to present.	£ 127,520.41
PA since formation.	**£ 2,217,420.43**

Thank you to those who continue to email me with details of your deposits. Please do keep doing so; this will become even more important as we move to the main PA account, as it allows me to cross-reference your figures with those our PAM receives.

Kindest regards,
Heide Hansford Treasurer , Royal British Legion Riders

In 1924, **Brough Superior** became the first company to advertise a motorcycle capable of exceeding 100 mph (the SS100). The company was so confident in its engineering that every single bike was road-tested by the factory; if it couldn't hit the 100 mph mark, it was sent back to the workshop and tinkered with until it could.

The Blue Light Hub, Milton Keynes

When we're in the Forces, we're taught to solve our own problems. Your boots don't fit? *"Your problem. You fix it."*Issues with your wages or tax? *"Your problem. You fix it."* A boil on your bum? Yep, you guessed it—your problem, you fix it. The longer we serve, the more we are conditioned to handle everything ourselves, because it belongs to us. Right?

When we finally transition out into "Civvy Street," we often carry that exact same outlook. It's our problem, so it's entirely up to us to find the solution. The only issue is that life on the outside is one heck of a lot more complicated than life on the inside.
Service personnel get a massive amount of help these days compared to nearly half a century ago when I served. Back then, I had exactly one month to get all my paperwork in order, return my kit, and get everything squared away—all delivered with the usual *"your problem, you sort it"* attitude.

So, once you are out, how on God's green earth do you deal with a local authority's housing department? Or a doctors' surgery? Or the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)? Where do you turn for help with mental health? Is it still just your problem to solve? Where do you even start? Most of us have no idea.
Consequently, lots of veterans tend to either ignore the issue—hoping it will magically solve itself or just go away—or they make a complete hash of things.

Imagine instead if you could have a proper "military" chat with some fellow veterans, eat cake and bacon butties, and drink coffee, all for free, while sharing old stories with new-found mates. Now imagine that also in the room with you—eating cake, drinking coffee, and telling jokes—were actual people from the DWP, housing departments, banks, mortgage companies, the Police, Alcoholics Anonymous, Models for Heroes, and the Royal British Legion.
You get the idea? Here in Milton Keynes, we have developed two distinct versions of help to provide exactly that.

The Blue Light Hub

We are incredibly lucky to have a very active Armed Forces Covenant Officer here named Johanna Hrycak, known to everyone simply as JJ. She works jointly for Milton Keynes University Hospital and Milton Keynes City Council, whilst also serving as an Officer in the local Logistics Corp. JJ is the glue that holds most of us together; frankly, most areas would benefit from a JJ.
Two years ago, she set up the Blue Light Hub social events, which run on the third Wednesday of every month. The events are hosted by Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue at our smart new tri-service building, and they even supply the drinks and bacon butties!

The Blue Light Hub, Milton Keynes cont….

Once a month, for a couple of hours, the same room fills with about 10 to 15 charities, statutory bodies, and self-help groups, alongside a dedicated team of veteran volunteers. Everyone mills around, chatting with the veterans who turn up for the banter, the food, and the coffee. For those in the know, it's a lifeline. You can even get free, door-to-door minibus transport to and from the venue if you're stuck.

How many times have we been handed a bit of paper and told, *"Oh, you need to phone this number to get help. Off you go now, like a good chap"*? Or how often have we said that to someone else? We take the paper, stick it in our pocket, and totally ignore it.

At the Blue Light Hub, we do things differently. We sit down and chat with you—most of us are veterans ourselves or closely linked—and we gently tease out a tiny bit of your problem. From there, and *only* with your explicit agreement, we can quite literally take you by the hand across the room and introduce you to the exact person who can help. Not an automated phone menu or a faceless organisation, but an actual human being. Alternatively, we can bring that person over to you.

A Real Impact

For example, the charity PTSD Resolution are regular attendees. Last year, we supported one veteran who arrived in a very poor state. We managed to get him a quiet, face-to-face chat with our local therapist in a side room right then and there. His registration with PTSD Resolution was completed over a coffee, and his therapy sessions were organised on the spot.

Even better, he was collected from his brand-new home—which had been sorted out by our brilliant Milton Keynes City Council Housing Officer (who also bakes fantastic cakes!)—and driven to every single one of his therapy sessions by a volunteer.

He is now well down the road to a full recovery. He had previously tried going through the NHS system twice, but couldn't cope with the process and had retreated to trying to sort it out on his own.

The Blue Light Hub event is our slightly more structured approach to problem-solving. We have our second anniversary coming up soon, and I have no doubt we'll have plenty of officials turning up to tell us what a wonderful job we're doing. We might even let them have a bit of cake.

The Blue Light Hub, Milton Keynes cont….

Kestrel View: A Place for Veterans

Our second regular event is a wonderfully relaxed animal and chat therapy session. A local lad and ex-Royal Green Jackets veteran, Darren 'Smudge' Smith, originally found that being around horses worked wonders for his mental health. Animals have that magical effect on a lot of us.

Sadly, Darren passed away a year or so ago, but his former partner, Michelle, and her team have set up Kestrel View at her stables to keep that legacy alive.

The atmosphere here is so laid-back it's practically horizontal. Held on the last Sunday of every month, it features plenty of free cake, bacon butties, tea, and coffee, all thanks to some fantastic sponsorship from Michelle's employers, customers, and her team.

Therapy comes in many forms here. There are a couple of Shetland ponies (including one with dwarfism—who knew!), a few proper-sized horses to fuss over and groom, and a pair of rather violent goats named Elvis and Cilla who will actively try to steal your cake. You'll also usually find a few very friendly dogs floating around who absolutely love bacon.

There is heaps of banter, zero judgment, and a genuine chance to help develop the venue if you fancy getting stuck in.

We all chip in to make the sessions run smoothly—making coffee, cooking bacon, eating cake, and telling stupid stories.

Spending a couple of hours out in the countryside, usually in the sun, surrounded by good friends... honestly, what could be better?

The Blue Light Hub, Milton Keynes cont….

Something Greater Than Ourselves

I have no idea just how many veterans and their families have been helped simply by turning up, handling the animals, making friends, and reliving the good times we experienced in the Forces—and the bad times, too, I suppose.

Now, I know neither of these events are specifically tailored to the Royal British Legion Riders Branch. But as a Rider myself, the atmosphere intensely reminds me of meeting up with a group before a funeral escort.

When you roll into a McDonald's or a designated car park, you approach a random group of bikers who have all gathered for something far greater than themselves. Within a few seconds, you realise you have everything in common. You chat freely; you don't even have to explain the RAF, Army, or Navy, what regiment you were in, or what your trade was. If one of those new-found friends had an issue you could fix, you'd jump right in to help, wouldn't you? Even if you didn't know them from Adam.

That exact outlook is what we have successfully cultivated here in Milton Keynes through a lot of seriously hard work by a lot of dedicated people. We've had veterans move to the area from other parts of the country who are genuinely amazed by what we have set up. Nationwide charity officials have travelled over just to experience it firsthand. We've even had council officers visit from well outside our patch—Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and even Norfolk—just to see what we are up to.

Unfortunately for them, we can't bottle the magic and send them back with a sample. To me, it is the exact same feeling I get when I turn up at McDonald's for an escort. I'm part of something much greater than the sum of its parts. And the best bit? It works.

Pictured above AFD 2021 on the balcony at the Blue Light Hub. The sun shone, 'Officials' said nice stuff, the cake flowed and Vets were getting 'sorted'. What else could you ask for?

Article by John Franklin

For more information or if you can offer any help to the Blue Light Hub please drop John and email john.efranklin@icloud.com

Drop-Tanks & Knee-Knockers

As Riders, we are all used to a certain level of comfort on two wheels. We expect decent suspension, dual brakes that actually halt our momentum, and frames that don't force our knees up into our chin.

However, back in 1942, the War Office decided that what British paratroopers and secret agents really required was a machine that resembled a motorised sausage, possessed zero front braking power, and could be shoved inside a metal tube to be hurled out of a modified bomber. effectively kick-starting the global postwar civilian folding-scooter craze.

The Welbike was dreamed up at Station IX, a highly classified Special Operations Executive (SOE) research facility in Welwyn. This was Britain’s real-life "Q Branch," where engineers invented silenced pistols, exploding lumps of coal, and miniature submarines.

To fit inside a standard 51-inch CLE Airdrop Canister, the handlebars folded flat and the seat slid into the frame. Built completely without suspension, it relied entirely on 10-inch tyres—and the rider's spine—to absorb shocks. Despite this, a paratrooper could unlatch the container and kick-start the engine in 11 seconds flat.

Because the fuel tank sat lower than the carburettor, gravity-fed petrol was impossible. The solution was a brass hand-pump in the tank cap; riders had to frantically pump mid-ride to keep the fuel pressurised while steering.

Over 3,600 units were produced, seeing action at Arnhem and on D-Day. However, the tiny wheels bogged down in Normandy's mud, and the engine struggled with a soldier carrying 60 lbs of battle gear. Often landing miles away from the troops in a drop, many paratroopers chose to abandon them rather than search a hot drop zone.

After the war, unissued Welbikes were sold in the USA as toys. Designer Lieutenant-Colonel John Dolphin later added a front brake and a proper tank, launching the iconic Corgi Scooter to spark the postwar folding-scooter craze.

A Note for the Branch: The next time you are on a branch run complaining about heavy clutches, remember our airborne predecessors. They tackled hostile terrain at 30 mph on an un-suspended lawnmower engine with their knees knocking their chins—for King and Country!

CAPTION COMPETITION

Welcome to our Caption Competition, the part of the newsletter where we stop trying to explain what the photo is about and let you do it for us.

In this scene a pair of bikers, a bucket of soapy water, and a pristine Harley that—crucially—doesn't belong to either of them. (but you might know who it does belong to!)

Why are they doing it? Your guess is literally the point. Look at the faces, look at the sponges, and give us your best one-liner.

Answers on a post card… no! Send in your captions by email to newsletter@rblriders.co.uk
There *Might* even be a prize for the winner!

DID YOU KNOW?
MOTORCYCLING ODDITIES

Though the **Yamaha RD350LC** is a Japanese machine, its DNA is heavily British. It was conceived, styled, and tested in Europe by a team headed by Brit Paul Butler. The iconic look was styled by Mike Ofield, and the development involved ex-Norton Villiers engineer Bob Trigg.

Postcard from Brighton

POSTCARD FROM BRIGHTON

In May, members came together at Annual Conference to celebrate successes, enjoy camaraderie and hear the latest RBL developments

Royal British Legion is as important now as it has ever been. That was the message from Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, the head of the UK Armed Forces, delivered via video link at the 2026 Annual Conference.

This year's largest membership event took place in Brighton between 8th and 10th May, with members and colleagues gathering from across the UK and overseas to hear updates from RBL leadership, vote on motions, browse the exhibition halls, applaud each other's efforts and enjoy spending time together.

The turnout in Brighton was high, and this year also saw a record number of people joining Annual Conference online, with residents across the six RBL care homes attending virtually.

Throughout the weekend's talks and presentations, the unwavering commitment of RBL members to supporting the Armed Forces community was recognised. Sir Richard pointed out that while no serviceperson hopes they'll need to turn to RBL for support, the knowledge that they can is a huge comfort.

RBL thanks the Membership team and colleagues from across the organisation who made the event a success. Here are some of the highlights.

SUPPORTING GREATNESS

At this year's Women's Section Forum, a cheque for £312,000 was presented for the Invictus Games Friends and Family programme, which

18

In this months Royal British Legion magazine (summer 2026), there is a fantastic article about the The Royal British Legion's 2026 Annual Conference and how it brought members together in Brighton this May to celebrate shared successes and discuss the future of the organisation.

The event emphasised the importance of engaging a new generation of supporters and featured highlights such as fundraising for the Invictus Games and a formal parade along the seafront. Throughout the weekend, leadership and members reinforced their ongoing commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community and ensuring the Legion remains relevant for years to come.

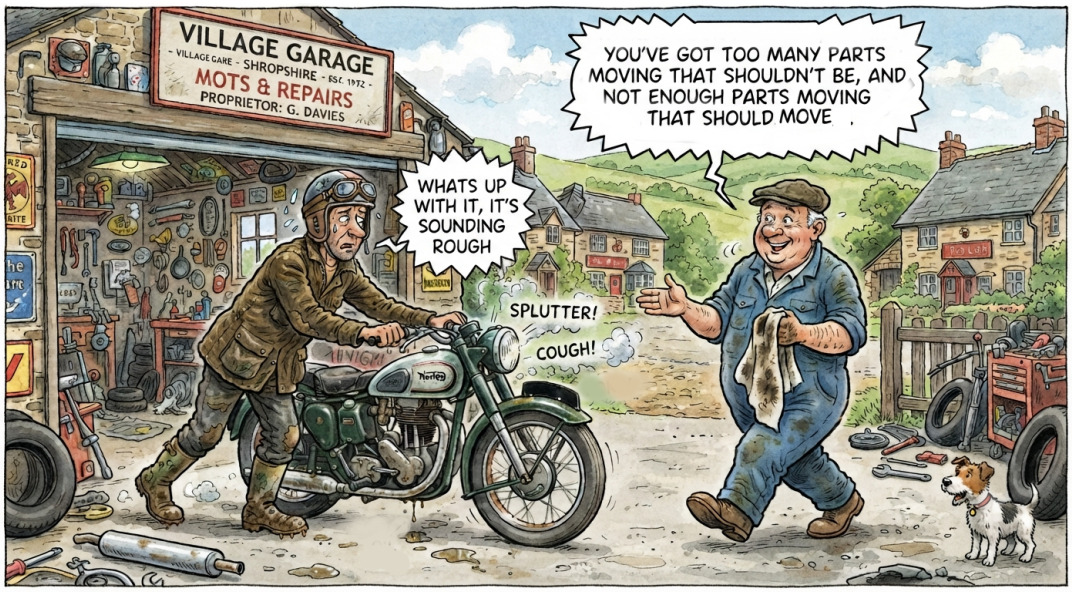
Notably the main image used in the article features no less than ten of our members…. Fame at last

The article can be found on page 18 of the Royal British Legion magazine (summer 2026)

The Royal British Legion (RBL) magazine is published quarterly and is a benefit for members. You might not be receiving it because your membership has lapsed, your mailing address is out of date, or you opted out of receiving physical mail when joining or renewing.

To sort this out quickly, you can log into the RBL Self-Service Portal to verify your contact details and mailing preferences. Alternatively, you can call their Membership Helpline at 0800 3077 773 (if you are in the UK) to check your account status.

You can find the self service portal at: https://selfservice.britishlegion.org.uk/security/login



Calling All Branch Scale Model Enthusiasts!

Do you build plastic model kits?
Or maybe you would like to try?

Our new branch group is the perfect place to discover the hobby of scale model making, whether you're a seasoned builder or looking for a new way to unwind.

We connect through a private Facebook group and upcoming fortnightly live streams to share tips, showcase "work in progress" photos, and enjoy a virtual brew with the rest of the group.

Proudly supported by Models for Heroes, we promote model making as a powerful tool for mindfulness, focus, and veteran well-being.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/2264298097691001
Message webmaster@riders-mail.com or linclonshire@riders-mail.com
or send a private message to Martin Moyse or Paul Lucas on facebook to join.

The UK offers a wealth of high-quality, free motorcycling content, ranging from practical training to enthusiast news. Platforms like BikeSocial and Visordown provide reliable updates on new models and riding gear, while sites like MoreBikes and Classic Bike Hub offer deep dives into industry stories and event calendars.

For those seeking road safety advice or community support, the government's THINK! campaign and Mental Health Motorbike serve as vital, accessible resources. Additionally, Adventure Bike Rider features a helpful library of free, downloadable guides for route planning and maintenance, making it easy to access expert knowledge for your next journey.

Can you complete this crossword?
A brand puzzle!

Answers on last page.

Across

2 Nothing to see here, just an electric ride
3 American sportbike brand founded by a former Harley engineer
4 Initially, Ken took money for an orange dirt bike
6 Lawsuit about a tree for a Hamamatsu legend
7 Not on for a change? It's a classic British bike!
8 A great victory for the British rider
12 Chief person from Delhi?
13 Italian brand featuring a transverse V-twin and an eagle logo
14 Swedish-origin brand famous for dirt bikes and chainsaws
15 Italian 'Red' marque known for Desmodromic valves
16 Sounds like a gentle bell for a Pesaro lion
18 Hidden in 'python dancing' is a Japanese giant
20 River in Japan where a green Ninja hides
22 Spring month followed by a song for a Noale racer
23 Is able to be morning? No, it's a three-wheeler

Down

1 Common man's laugh for a Milwaukee cruiser
3 German giant famous for the 'Boxer' twin engine
5 Bull and a Mexican snack—without the K—for a trials bike
9 High voltage in the middle of summer for an Italian classic
10 King's field is a place for a Bullet
11 Agent leaves a spy's ship for a scooter maker
17 Bachelor of Science with an Apple? No, it's a Birmingham bike
19 Varese-based brand that once owned Ducati and MV Agusta
21 Sweet potato and a laugh for a tuning fork brand

Artificial Intelligence! Can it be useful to the Riders Branch ?

In the modern world, Artificial Intelligence is no longer a sci-fi trope; it is a high-tech "co-pilot" for human intuition. Its reach is staggering: in medicine, AI decodes protein structures to design life-saving drugs in weeks; in conservation, “bio-acoustic" sensors listen for the sound of illegal logging. It even acts as a digital archaeologist, restoring century-old film footage and "filling in the blanks" on crumbled ancient inscriptions to bring history back to life.

In the creative industries, AI is de-aging actors instantly and generating visual effects that once cost millions. Advertisers even use it to create "dynamic" commercials that adapt to the viewer. But the question for us today is closer to home: How can AI serve the modern biker, and specifically, the Riders Branch?

AI is becoming a digital "guardian angel" for motorcyclists through advanced safety systems. We are already seeing smart helmets like the Forcite Mk1S (£929), which uses AI to monitor blind spots and predict collisions before they happen.

Beyond hardware, navigation apps have evolved past simple "Point A to Point B" logic. They can now analyse weather patterns, road surface quality, and even the "twistiness" of a route to curate the perfect ride based on your skill level and machine.

In the garage, AI is replacing the oily, dog-eared Haynes manuals of old. It acts as a round-the-clock master mechanic. If you’re facing a stubborn mechanical gremlin you can’t quite explain, you can simply show the AI a photo of the problem and get an instant diagnosis and solution.

For the RBLR, the possibilities are bounded only by our imagination. Take the "chore" out of administration—need an article for a regional newsletter or a submission for *3542*? Rather than bashing away at a keyboard for hours, you can provide an AI with simple bullet points: "*Ride-out Saturday, Poppy Appeal update, welcome five new members, visited George’s Cafe.*" In seconds, you’ll have a polished draft. It still needs a human eye for the final check, but the heavy lifting is done for you.

AI can even help manage the logistics of our events. It can analyse live traffic and roadworks to suggest the safest, most efficient routes for a 20-bike formation. If you find a road closed at the last minute or a learner joins the group unexpectedly, there’s no need to panic over a paper map. Simply ask the AI for a new route from A to B that avoids motorways and includes a bike-friendly cafe stop.

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Visuals are another game-changer. AI can remove an ugly background from a great ride-out photo or create eye-catching event posters from scratch. Our own member, **Paul Lucas (Mumbles)**, recently proved this by producing a fantastic, highly original AI-generated image to advertise his first breakfast meet. It was a brilliant, professional result—well done, Mumbles!

The list of uses is endless, and the technology is here to stay.

Perhaps it's time we let AI do the "boring bits" so we can spend more time doing what we do best: **Riding.**

TOP SECRET!

Facebook is undeniably excellent for staying connected and building those niche communities we all enjoy, but its greatest strength—privacy—is also our biggest hurdle. Keeping our county groups private is a brilliant move for security, mostly because it ensures the rest of the world remains blissfully unaware of our internal banter or exactly how many pies it takes to power a committee meeting.

The downside to this digital fortress, however, is that I frequently spot some truly superb event photos and reports that are effectively "locked in the vault." While it's great to share these moments within our inner circle, keeping such high-quality content behind closed doors is a bit like hosting a grand parade in a soundproof basement. Every time a brilliant post stays strictly on Facebook, we lose a prime opportunity to showcase the branch's hard work, raise our public profile, and convince potential new members that we are actually as active and exciting as we claim to be.

It takes a mere two minutes more to send those photos and a brief summary my way for the website news pages. Please don't let your best work remain a well-kept secret within the "secret society" of Facebook when it could be doing some heavy lifting for our recruitment and PR on the open web!

To send an article please simply email the article and photos to the webmaster.|

webmaster@riders-mail.com

HM Naval Base Portsmouth Families Day

On Saturday 11th July 2026, members from the Hants branch attended the HM Naval Base Portsmouth families day.

This is an annual event that enables the families of the dockyard workers to see what goes on in the dockyard.

This year we had 7 bikes and this attracted a lot of attention and some good feedback for what the RBL and the RBLR does.

Most of the guys were ex navy and hadn't been into the yard for over 20 years. We even got them onto HMS Queen Elizabeth, which was great.

A great day, albeit, hot but worthwhile. We have already been invited back next year.

Neil Grant
Hampshire County Rep

Bike Tours for the Wounded

Bike Tours for the Wounded (www.bt4tw.co.uk) is a dedicated not-for-profit community interest company that supports wounded, injured, or sick veterans from all ranks and branches of the British Armed Forces. Since its founding in 2012, the charity has assisted over 700 beneficiaries by providing fully funded places on transformative motorcycle touring challenges. These journeys, which have spanned iconic American routes like Route 66 and historical commemorations along the D-Day beaches in Normandy, are designed to offer more than just a ride; they provide a vital space for veterans to break away from their everyday struggles and engage in a process of recovery.

Operating under the motto "Ride, Refocus, and Decide," the initiative pairs beneficiaries with experienced host riders who serve as companions, mentors, and friends. The primary goal is to help veterans move past the feeling that their current circumstances are permanent, allowing them the time and mental clarity to reflect on their lives and choose a new, positive path forward. By fostering camaraderie and providing a change of scenery in the company of those who understand their journey, the organisation helps veterans rebuild their confidence, improve their mental wellbeing, and open doors to new personal and professional opportunities. For members of the RBL Riders Branch, this represents a powerful example of how the motorcycling community can offer direct, life-changing support to those who have served.

This year Bike Tours 4 The Wounded will be running two Route 66 tours – one in September and another in October.

We're looking for a small number of experienced motorcyclists to join our rider team and accompany wounded veterans on an unforgettable 12-day journey along America's most iconic highway.

As a support rider, you'll be doing far more than riding Route 66. You'll help provide encouragement, companionship and confidence to a veteran whose life has been changed by injury or illness. Your presence can help make this a journey they will never forget.
If you've ever wanted to ride Route 66, this is your opportunity to do it with a real purpose.
We're just a few riders short of a full team, and we'd love to hear from experienced riders who feel they could make a difference…and this year we are honoured to be taking Chelsea Pensioners on the trip of a lifetime
To find out more and register your interest, visit the Bike Tours 4 The Wounded website www.bt4tw.co.uk

Ride Route 66. Change a Life.

The Members Shop

The Branch Members' Shop is open and continues to grow, with plenty of great items available and even more products coming soon. We've recently added new pin badges, glass crest with light up base, hot & cold drinks bottles and embroidered patches with new stock already in the pipeline.

If you're ordering online, payment is by **bank transfer only**.

If you're attending the AGM, you'll also be able to purchase items on the day – please note these sales will be **cash only**.

Keep an eye on the website for updates on new products as they arrive.
https://rblr.org.uk/shop/

Kelsea Shea-Hoyle

Lancashire County Update

We're proud to be in our third year supporting Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service's Alive to Drive road safety campaign. These events see the Fire & Rescue Service, Police and Ambulance Service working together to deliver a realistic demonstration of the emergency response following a serious road traffic collision, including the rescue of a casualty trapped inside a vehicle.

Alive to Drive continues to be a fantastic event to support, giving us the opportunity to promote safer riding and driving while working alongside our emergency service colleagues.

Looking ahead, details of this year's Lancashire Branch Christmas Meal at Coral Island, Blackpool have now been released. If you'd like to join us, you'll find all the information on the Branch Forum and Facebook page.

Kindest Regards,
Kelsea Shea-Hoyle
Lancashire County Rep RBLR

North East Region Round-Up.

The North East Region began the year with a focused period of behind-the-scenes planning, ensuring our event calendar, paperwork, and equipment were fully prepared for the busy season ahead. We kicked off our traditional caravanning and biking season over the Easter weekend at South Moor Farm in Dalby Forest. Despite facing grim weather conditions, including driving rain and gale-force winds, the group made the most of the trip by assisting the farm owners with clearing wood piles and enjoying the camaraderie that comes with such challenging, albeit memorable, outings.

April 25th was a significant day dedicated to reconciliation and remembrance. We attended Castletown Cemetery in Sunderland to continue the legacy of Mary Reid, a local woman who spent over 60 years caring for the graves of Luftwaffe aircrew buried there. Following a conversation Mary had with one of our members before she passed, the Riders Branch took on the responsibility of ensuring these graves are not forgotten. We held a short service of remembrance and placed crosses on each of the graves, honouring the spirit of peace that Mary championed. Later that day, we traveled to Chevington to join the Anzac Day service organised by the Newcastle and Gateshead RAFA, paying our respects to those who traveled from across the globe to defend freedom.

Our support for the Poppy Appeal remained a priority on May 22nd, when four of our riders attended a thank-you party for Chris Mabbot. Having worked closely with him for over a decade, we were pleased to have assisted his fundraising efforts to the tune of £1,000 this past year, and we look forward to continuing that partnership. On May 30th, we hosted an RBL Recruitment Advisors course in Crook, organised by County Durham Rep Simon Wilson. It was an informative day that saw seven members from both the North East and Yorkshire regions become fully qualified Recruitment Advisors.

June proved to be an exceptionally active month for the region. On June 7th, several members joined hundreds of other bikers at the Tommy Charity Bike Rally in Seaham. It was a privilege to support this event, as the proceeds benefited local children's charities, including the Seaham Sea Cadets, who are affiliated with our region. On June 20th, we attended the opening of the first phase of the Veterans' Walkway at the Cenotaph in Whitley Bay. Finally, on June 21st, we hosted our traditional stand at the South Shields Armed Forces Day. The event featured the re-establishment of the popular motorcycle ride-in from Sunderland, which saw approximately 500 bikes ride up the coast. It was a successful day that combined great company with a fundraising total of over £700 for the Poppy Appeal, further strengthening our support for the Armed Forces community.

East Midlands Region Round-Up.

The Region is well into its event season and there has been several successful events already held, with many more in the planning.
It is a pleasure to be able to report that there has been a lot of cross County support going on, with members 'crossing County borders' to support their fellow member with events. This demonstrates the true nature of the Riders as a National Branch working together for the good and benefit of all.

As in previous years all Counties of the Region met enroute and joined together to ride to the Branches Memorial Service at the Arboretum to pay our respects to those that are no longer around to ride along side us but will always be in our memories. Thank you to all who attended.

Unfortunately, we have recently had two County Reps stand down, Calven Bayliss from Leicestershire and Rutland and Paul Lucas (Mumbles) from Lincolnshire. It's always sad to see a County without a Rep, but I would like to thank both of them for stepping up in the first place and for what they have done for the Region. If anyone is considering either of these positions please do get in touch with me to discuss further.

It only remains for me to say thank you to you all for what you are doing, and don't forget when you are out and about to take care of yourselves. Ride Safe, stay hydrated and don't forget the sunscreen and your hat.

Paula Stroud

East Midlands Regional Rep

Derbyshire

Where do we start. So far this year the County has been very busy with both fundraising events and ride outs.
We have had the chance to put our stand at CMC Chesterfields Sunday events and so far, we have been a part of their Monkey Bike Day and Classic Japanese Day with three more events to come. These are more for recruiting than fund raising as it is purely bikers that are attending, we have handed out a great number of the Branch Leaflets so let's see if
the effort is worth it.

Earlier in the year members for the county along with a couple of the Notts members attended a Biker Down course, I think that all those attending got some thing from it. At some point if a suitable location and dates can be found we are looking at sorting out a Recruiting Advisors course so watch the space.

East Midlands Region Round-up cont….

As for fundraising, we have done six events so far with a total of £2243.84 raised for the PA. By the time we produce yet another report we will have done at least a further 6 events. Plus of course a number of ride outs. We take every opportunity on these occasions to hand out recruitment leaflets and talk to the public in the hope that they will become members.

In June a number of the members will be make their way across to Ypres and the Somme area, some have family members that lost their lives in the Great War that either hopefully have a grave that we will hopefully visit to pay our respects and to those who have no resting place, just their names on Theipval and Tyne Cott. Once again we will be taking the opportunity to be part of the nightly ceremony at the Menin Gate, laying two wreaths; one on behalf of the Branch and one for the Naval Division.

Finally, we have been lucky in recruiting 4 new members who have all been very active in helping out at events, long may this continue.

Debbie Hunter
Derbyshire County Rep

Leicestershire and Rutland

Sunday 10th May, 2026

On a glorious day in the sunshine – not often that we can say that!! Steve Godley acting as Road Captain led a ride-out with Paula Stroud and Mick Guy to Bottisham Air Museum in Cambridgeshire.

The Museum was opened in 2009 to commemorate the role of the airfield at Bottisham in World War Two. It is the only UK museum dedicated to the Royal Air Force, United States 8th Army Air Force and Belgian Air Forces. They are now operating out of the last remaining airfield buildings to exist within the airfield's original perimeter. Refreshments are available at the Flying Tractor Café, The Museum Café serves a variety of delicious locally sourced cakes and scones. They also offer sandwiches, snacks, hot and cold drinks and ice-creams. It has to said that the Sausage Rolls were the BEST ever tasted!! (The author has impeccable taste!!).

East Midlands Region Round-up cont….

Riders Branch Memorial Ride to the NMA

On Saturday 16th May, Steve Godley in the role of Road Captain led a ride of ten riders from Leicestershire & Rutland to the meet up point at the Cherry Tree Farm for comfort breaks and a catch up with old friends from the region, for onward travel en-masse to the NMA.

We were blessed with good weather throughout the ride in and the service of remembrance…. Some were not so lucky on their return journeys, enduring some sudden and intense rain.

Conkers 1940's Weekend

Saturday 20th June, 2026

The first "Stand Event" of the 2026 season was held at Conkers Discovery Centre near Swadlincote, when we were invited in for the 1940's weekend behind held there.

Supporting Riders were Tina Cooper, Stewart Bostock, Neil White, Paula & David Stroud.

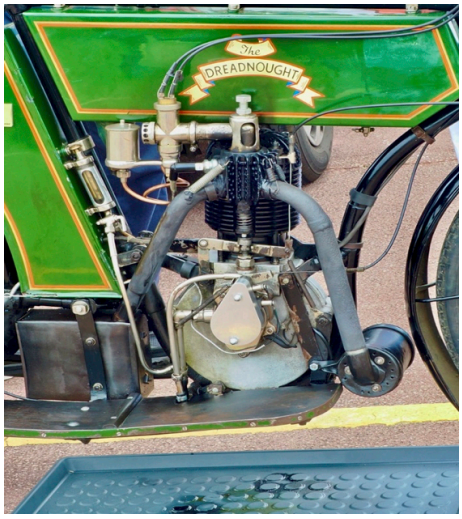
The final sum of donations was £163.10, which is the highest amount ever collected from the very generous general public who were there. This is starting to look as if Conkers Discovery Centre could become a regular event for Leicestershire & Rutland Riders.

Vintage Motorcycle Club – Banbury Run 2026

Sunday 7th June, 2026

The Banbury Run was well supported by Warwickshire.RBLR and ably assisted by Ian Cooke on the Helmet stand and Steve Godley as a Roving Marshall from Leicestershire & Rutland.

East Midlands Region Round-up cont….



The Banbury Run is managed solely by volunteers and a lot of very dedicated Vintage Motorcycle enthusiasts all attending the 76th Banbury Run. This is a true sporting event, where the motorcycles MUST be older than 1931, where most of the Motorcycles do NOT have a speedometer (not required before 1936) and it comes down to the rider who must calculate speed and distance as a part of the competition.

There are auto jumbles and motorcycle clubs, such as the Harley-Davidson Riders Club of Great Britain. Other clubs are available!!!

Armed Forces Week – Raise the Flag

On Monday 22 June 2026, Leicestershire & Rutland RBLR were represented by Lou Street (representing Anstey RBL Branch in a dual role) Michael Hassell, Mick Guy & Steve Godley at County Hall in Leicester to support the raising of the Armed Forces flag at the Stand Easy Memorial.

The event was very well organised and well attended by multiple Lord Lieutenants, Vice Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Councillors, staff from County Hall and local school children who read out a poem in the intense heat!!

11 Standard Bearers attended including the Type 22 and Type 42 Associations, the Royal Army Medical Corp and the Royal Engineers Association, as well as local RBL branches.

Northamptonshire

This period started with a charity event at Cummins, supporting their VE Day celebrations. Cummins have been a staunch supporter of the RBLR for many years and have scheduled a presentation of a cheque covering the donations they have collected on Remembrance Day (11th November 2026)

They have asked for as many members as possible to attend and take part in a service of remembrance with their employees. We will be laying a wreath in the Cummins garden of remembrance along with dozens of poppies the company commissioned.

East Midlands Region Round-up cont….

We have had 3 county meetings this quarter, but the attendance of Northamptonshire-based members is still disappointing, Ted and I have been joined by Arther but even his addition restricts what we can do in the county.

I would like to take time to thank Ted Mitchell for his steadfast support since I took over as Northants county representative, without him and now Arther we would not be a functioning county.

Support at our meetings from members of other counties in our region has been impressive and a welcome boost, as you can see from the main picture.

Jim Haines

Northamptonshire County Representative

Nottinghamshire

The late spring and early summer months have been incredibly active for the Nottinghamshire RBLR, filled with successful charity events, joint region meet-ups, and memorable ride outs.

The busy schedule kicked off on April 26th with a breakfast and ride-out to the American Car and Bike event, where six dedicated members braved the unseasonably cold weather to represent the branch.

Moving into May, the branch saw a fantastic turnout for the RBLR Memorial Ride on May 16th. Seventeen Nottinghamshire riders gathered for breakfast at the Crossing Club in Ironville before setting off for Willington. There, they joined fellow riders from across the East Midlands to ride into the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) together as a unified region.

That same weekend, from May 16th to 17th, several members headed out for the Spirit of Sherwood event, camping out for the weekend. A massive thank you goes to Darren Wilson for his hard work in arranging and leading this successful weekend. The event was a phenomenal fundraising success, bringing in £361 in cash and £290 via Toucan, resulting in a grand total of £651 raised.

June proved to be an equally milestone-heavy month. On June 6th, the demanding RBLR 1000 event took place. Branch members AJ Wilcox, Andrew Hague, Rachel Johnson, and Darren Bishop-Wilson all stepped up to the challenge and successfully completed the RBLR 500, collectively raising just over £1,300 for the Poppy Appeal.

East Midlands Region Round-up cont….

The social ride-outs continued on June 14th with a trip to the Boston Bubble Car Museum. This run doubled as a reconnaissance mission for a potential new vehicle for Tim Swinburn, and the day was made even better by the company of two riders from the Lancaster branch who joined in on the fun.

Finally, on Saturday, June 20th, Nottinghamshire RBLR coordinated a major joint meet-up with the Wiltshire RBLR at the Triumph Factory Museum. The gathering truly showed the wider community spirit of the club, drawing a total of 16 riders from across the country, including members from Essex, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire. While the official group photo managed to capture the early arrivals, the Wiltshire crew unfortunately missed the snapshot—leaving us to assume they were just a bit camera shy!

Overall, it has been a brilliant stretch of miles, camaraderie, and fantastic fundraising results for the Poppy Appeal. Thank you to everyone who rode, volunteered, and supported these events.

Louise Wilcox
Nottinghamshire County Rep

How well do you know your motorcycles? Can you answer these simple questions?

Answers on last page

1. What was the first production motorcycle to be equipped with Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)
2. What is the specific purpose of an "Expansion Chamber" on a two-stroke motorcycle engine
3. What physical phenomenon allows a motorcycle to steer at speeds above 15–20 mph?
4. Who is the only person to have won World Championships on both two wheels (Grand Prix) and four wheels (Formula 1)?
5. What does the acronym "H-O-G" officially stand for in the Harley-Davidson world?

West Midlands Region Round-Up.

The West Midlands has been a hive of activity over the past few months, with our County Reps and regional leadership working tirelessly to maintain a strong presence at remembrance services, community events, and training sessions.

A key focus for the region recently was the Anzac Day service at Cannock, where our Regional Rep, Tammy, laid a wreath on behalf of the branch, joined by a solid turnout of riders from across the region. Additionally, several members, including Tammy, Janet, Billy, and Steve, prioritised their skills by completing a motorcycle first aid course back in April.

In Gloucestershire, Janice has been leading an eventful season. Following the Little Vintage show, the county has been focusing on building support for ride-outs and stands. Members recently participated in a North Wales bike tour, and the upcoming schedule is looking bright with Staple Hill and Stroud Armed Forces Day events, alongside the Lady Katherine Berkshire Classic vehicle show. Janice is also in the process of finalising potential venues for a dedicated Riders Poppy Appeal stand.

Herefordshire continues to be well-served by Craig, who successfully organised the Coleford Carnival of Transport over Easter, which saw fantastic support from both local and out-of-county riders. Craig continues to spread the word by distributing RBLR flyers across local cafes, and he is set to attend the Violette Szabo Memorial Day at Wormlow on 12th July.

North Staffordshire, led by Janet, has had a successful run at the Tamworth Castle grounds and a warm reception in Burntwood, leading to an invitation to return next year. The team also performed well at this month's Coventry Motofest—stepping in for Warwickshire—and is now looking ahead to events in September and October. Meanwhile, in South Staffordshire, Billy has kept active by attending the St. George's Day flag-raising in Wolverhampton, with his focus now turned to the Armed Forces Day events at Wolverhampton and Himley.

Shropshire has seen a fresh injection of energy under Steve, who has been in the role since March. While his initial breakfast meet-ups faced some attendance hurdles, he has secured a strong calendar of five confirmed events, including the Shrewsbury Castle Armed Forces Day, RAF Shawbury Family Day, and the Battle of the Somme remembrance parade, where he will lay a wreath and recite a poem. Steve and his wife, Jo, are also working closely with the Shropshire outreach officer to engage with local veterans, and the county's kit has been upgraded with a new gazebo and restocked Poppy Appeal merchandise.

Warwickshire, managed by Keith, has had a productive stretch as well. The Artisan and Reenactment market was a particular highlight this year, driven by the popularity of the new 2026 poppy pins. Despite facing heavy rain at Coventry Motofest, the team remained resilient and earned a return invite for next year. Keith also reports a successful turnout at the Banbury Run, where several branch members volunteered in various capacities to support the organisers, and the county is now preparing for its two biggest events of the year in August.

Yorkshire Region Round-Up.

Yorkshire held its second regional meeting of the year at Lister House in April. A massive thank you goes to Geraldine and her team at Lister House, not only for graciously providing the room for our meeting, but also for laying on a tremendous buffet with tea and coffee. The ride up was perfect, with nobody getting lost at all along the way... honest (wink wink).

After the meeting, a few of us stayed behind to chat with some of the staff and residents before heading off in all directions back home. We also conducted a raffle, with the money raised being shared between the Yorkshire Tea Fund and Lister House, both benefiting from the fantastic total of £160 raised.

May saw the first of the Yorkshire MAG rallies, Into The Valley, being held at Driffield Show ground. Big thanks go to Steve Greasley, Ian Wilson, and Tony Anderson for manning the stand and raising £160 over the weekend. A few of us made our way to East Yorkshire to enjoy the event, but with a little too much sun and probably a little too much beer, it made for a very relaxed Saturday.

May also saw the first of the Branch events taking place with the annual memorial ride to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Another great turnout from the Yorkshire members saw us setting off from Woodall Services and riding in convoy down the M1 and A38. The service was expertly organised, as usual, by the Branch Officers, and we shared the day with the NMA as it celebrated its 25th birthday.

The Yorkshire Region Round-Up cont….

Our South Yorkshire Rep, Marie Moreman, with the help of Roy Kirkham and Alan Wright, attended the Sunnyside Spring Gala in Rotherham and raised a very impressive £118.45. Well done, guys.

Our May Meet & Greet was organised by our East Yorkshire Rep, Tony Anderson, who coincided the meet with the Inspire ride-out to Bomber Command in Lincoln. The ride started at Barton-upon-Humber and led us down some winding roads for 90 minutes until we arrived at our destination. For many of us, this was our first visit to Bomber Command, and we all found the service enjoyable, including the flypast by a Dakota. This will certainly be back on the calendar for next year.

Yorkshire once again welcomed the Iron Butt Association UK as they hosted the RBLR1000 endurance ride at Squires Café over the weekend of 5–7 June.

A total of 178 riders set off on their epic journeys at 05:00, undertaking either a 500-mile or 1,000-mile challenge within a 24-hour period. The event has already raised more than £31,000 for the Poppy Appeal, with the total expected to increase further once all donations have been collected.

Our South Yorkshire Representative, Marie, raised an impressive £612 for the Poppy Appeal through the Yorkshire stand at Squires over the weekend. She was ably supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who shared duties between staffing the stand and marshalling the event. Their efforts helped ensure another successful weekend for both riders and supporters.

This year also saw Yorkshire introduce a new competition for RBLR1000 participants. The Yorkshire rider who completes the 1,000-mile challenge within 24 hours and raises the highest amount for the Poppy Appeal will be awarded the David Wells Shield at the July Regional Meeting.

Thank you to everyone who took part, volunteered, donated, and supported this fantastic event

July – September is a very busy period, with Armed Forces Days across Yorkshire, 2 MAG rallies, Hornsea Bike Show and finally Rotherham Show in September; so plenty to be getting on with. Oh, and don't forget, The Yorkshire Region will be launching its Poppy Appeal at the Winter Gardens, Harrogate on Saturday 24th October.
All that is left to say is: Ride Safe

Jay Moreman Yorkshire Regional Rep

Eastern Region Round-up

The Eastern Region has been busy, even with the quieter spells. Planning for the two-day Huntingdon Armed Forces Day has been a major focus, with several members stepping up to volunteer for both days. We also saw the annual RBLR/Poppy Day at the Ace Café over the late May Bank Holiday weekend. The weather was almost too good, which saw many people heading to the coast rather than the café, but we still held a short parade and trophy presentations.

In Bedfordshire, we have been active on multiple fronts. The Spring Start-Up at Bedford Fire Station on 19th May was a success, with £122.70 banked alongside additional donations via the QR code. We supported the Leighton Buzzard Branch at their May Day Fayre on 4th May, and a group of us took part in the RBLR Memorial ride to the National Memorial Arboretum.

We also held a successful Sunday Run at Gifford Park in Milton Keynes on 17th May, which was a great social turnout. Remembrance remains central to what we do; the 15th anniversary of the end of Op TELIC in Leighton Buzzard on 22nd May was well attended, and we were proud to lay a wreath on behalf of the RBLR at both the morning and evening services. We also had a presence at the RBLR Day at the Ace Café on 24th May, despite the intense heat.

A massive well done to Janie Vee. She stood down as the Bedfordshire County Rep last year, and we were thrilled to see her win the Fundraiser of the Year category at the Bedford Independent Everyday Heroes Awards on 7th May. She was nominated for her work raising over £77k for the Poppy Appeal in 2025—a brilliant way to cap off her time volunteering for the RBLR.

Hertfordshire has also been productive, starting with the Abbott's Langley carnival where they raised £263.00. They have been heavily involved in the committee for the Letchworth Armed Forces Day and have also been active at the East Herts Miniature Railway and the Leverstock Green Fete. They are currently working on an RBLR day at the DeHavilland aircraft museum for the remembrance fortnight.

Northern Ireland Roundup

The Northern Ireland branch has been remarkably active over the past several months, maintaining a steady pace of remembrance, charitable outreach, and community engagement. Our commitment to honouring those who served remains at the core of our activities, balanced with important opportunities for fellowship and branch support.

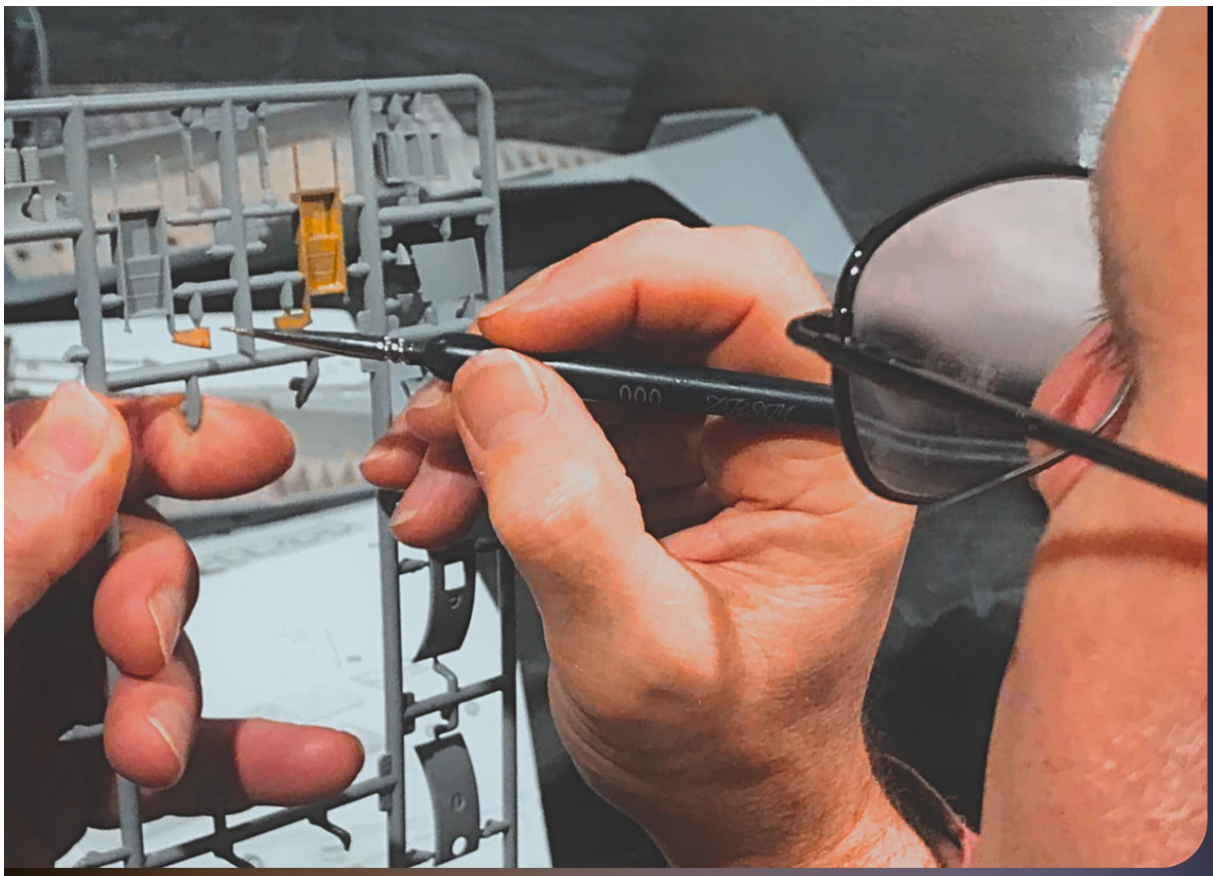
Our focus on remembrance began on the 7th of March, when thirteen members attended the Massereene Memorial Service to honor Sappers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar. Mervyn McAlleese laid a wreath on behalf of the branch to mark the 17th anniversary of their deaths. This was followed on March 8th by ten members attending the Whitebrae Memorial Service to commemorate the three off-duty Scottish soldiers—John and Joseph McCaig and Dougald McCaughey—killed in 1971, with Glen Wilson laying a wreath for the branch.

Charitable efforts have been equally significant. Between the 13th and 15th of March, seven members participated in the "Great Tommy" Sleep Out near Ballymoney, raising £693 for homeless veterans—an event that offered both a social opportunity and a chance to highlight the harsh realities faced by those experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, on the 5th of April, fifteen members visited the Somme Nursing Home in Belfast to deliver Easter eggs to residents and staff, a meaningful opportunity to connect with those in the home.

We have also prioritised social and branch-led activities. In April, many members gathered at Kilroot Orange Hall in Carrickfergus to celebrate Nigel's 60th birthday, and later in the month, seven members enjoyed breakfast and a historical tour of Brownlow House in Lurgan. Given its deep military history as a base for the 16th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, the 10th Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, and later American troops, we are currently eyeing the location for our fourth regional meeting this October. On the 4th of May, Tony P., Nigel, Sophia, Nikki, and I supported the Helen's Bay RBL by displaying our motorcycles at their May Day Family Fun Day, which served as an excellent platform to promote the Riders' Branch and the work of the Royal British Legion to the general public.

May was a particularly busy month. Ten members traveled to the National Memorial Arboretum for the 2026 RBLR Memorial Ride, while simultaneously, Mervyn and John M. represented us back home at the 100th anniversary parade for the Cregagh, Wandsworth, and Ormeau RBL branches in Belfast.

As we moved into June, remembrance remained central. Sixteen members took part in the Falklands Ride of Respect on the 6th, visiting the memorial at Blaris Cemetery in Lisburn to honour Lance Corporal Tony Cork. This annual initiative continues to raise vital funds for the South Atlantic Medal Association. On the 7th of June, six members were honoured to be invited to ride at the back of the parade marking the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, traveling from Franklin Street in Belfast to St. Anne's Cathedral. Finally, we concluded the month with a group attendance at Armed Forces Day in Coleraine on the 20th. We are now turning our full attention to the upcoming National Rally at the end of July, which has been eagerly anticipated by all.



Support for our former and current armed forces and emergency service personnel

Model making is more than a tiny hobby, it is an global timeless activity that has a big impact on our bravest. With the help of donors that champion our cause, we improve lives.

MODELS FOR HEROES

#PeaceByPiece

Building confidence

Models for Heroes provides the resources for building and painting miniatures, a traditional hobby that is scientifically proven* to improve mood and reduce stress.

Support that fits

We personalise selected model kits , miniatures and resources that suit all interests and skill levels, with special consideration to triggers and physical challenges, delivered directly to individuals homes.

Tiny challenges

Our 50+ face to face sessions across the UK encourage free participation, adult camaraderie and sharing of hobby skills. Daily online model making sessions provide the gift of a hobby without barriers.

Pride & Purpose

We attend public exhibitions across the entire UK to display beneficiaries' models built in the pursuit of well being. This ignites a sense of achievement, satisfaction and pride and purpose.

Wherever you are

Following a clinical or self referral or attending a face to face session, M4H Volunteers create space to safely decompress and reflect in a supportive, emotionally genuine environment.

Contact us to find out how Models for Heroes can support you, your colleagues, or your clients.

Our work is made possible by donations from individuals, organisations, companies and our own volunteers who all understand the power of wellbeing through meaningful activity.

Become a supporter today. m4h.org.uk

Registered with FR FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

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* Lawrence C, Ellison D. A small-scale study exploring the efficacy of scale modelling as an open intervention for military veterans with mental health conditions. BJOT.

In Memoriam

We remember here our comrades and friends who passed away while members of the Riders Branch.

Ant 'Butch' Butcher 12 Aug 2026

Graham Jenkins 1st June 2026

Roger Eveleigh April 2026

Joan Gibbs 7th February 2026

KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP DETAILS UP TO DATE

Changed you phone number?

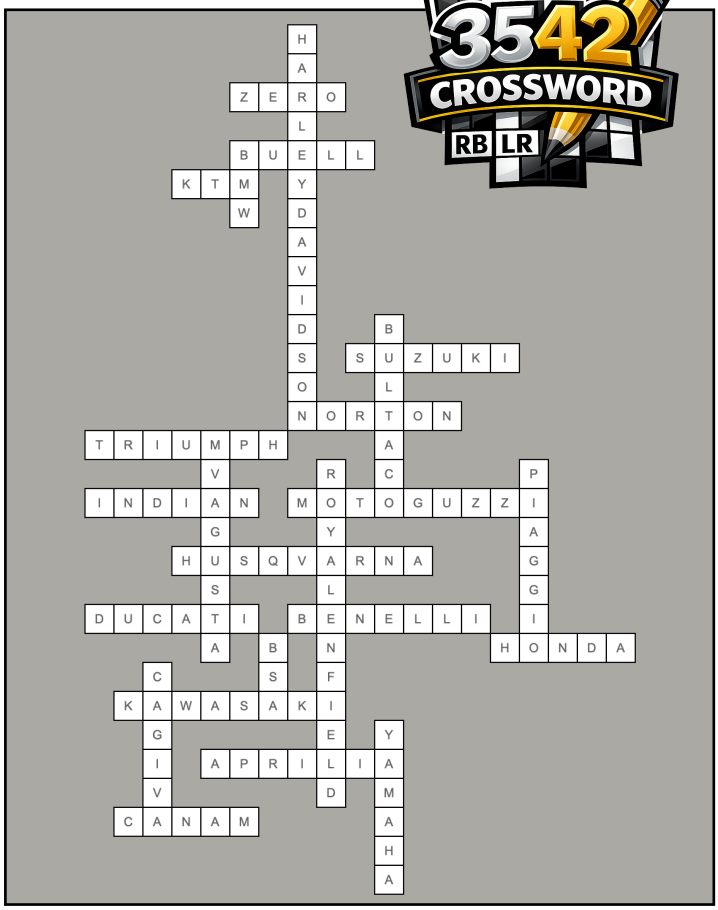
Changed your email address?

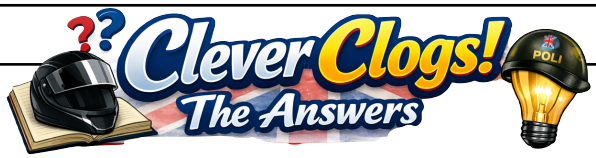
Moved home?

Don't forget to update your membership details on the RBL portal.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

https://selfservice.britishlegion.org.uk/security/login





1. The BMW K100 (1988)
2. It uses reflected sound pressure waves to push unburnt fuel-air mixture back into the cylinder before the exhaust port closes, acting like a "sonic" supercharger.
3. Counter-steering. To turn right, the rider applies forward pressure to the right handlebar, momentarily steering the wheel left, which tips the bike into a right-hand lean.
4. John Surtees.
5. Harley Owners Group. (Though "Hog" was originally a nickname for the 1920s racing team who carried a live pig on victory laps).