

Grewelthorpe Branch The Royal British Legion
Annual Report to the Grewelthorpe Parish Council

I am very pleased to report that 2019 has been another successful year for the Grewelthorpe Branch and the Kirkby Malzeard Sub-branch. Sadly, we have no new members to announce, but with Grewelthorpe's 27 and Kirkby's 11 members, the combined Branch continues to play an active role in the local community.

It has been an interesting year and those present at the 2018 AGM will remember that it was at that meeting the subject of the future maintenance of the Grewelthorpe Wayside Cross was raised. I am pleased to say that a year later, thanks to the efforts of this Branch and with the generous contribution from the Grewelthorpe Parish Council, the 102-year old Wayside Cross is now fully restored with new hardwood top boards and a new inscription block to replace the original block that had been missing for many years. The proud history of the memorial has been recorded on a specially commissioned bronze plaque that now stands in front of the Cross. In a short ceremony at Crosshills, held immediately after the Annual Service of Remembrance at St James' Church on the 10th November, the plaque was revealed and the Cross was re-dedicated by the priest.

On the subject of the Annual Remembrance Service, the Branch had received a request earlier in the year from members of the Mickley community, for the names of The Mickley Fallen to be included in the Grewelthorpe Service. I am very proud to say that the Branch agreed to request and it was my privilege to lay a wreath bearing the names of those individuals from both communities who gave their lives in the service of their country. The Service of Remembrance was taken once more by Mrs Liz Jarvis who, just before the sounding of the Last Post, added a very fitting reading explaining the background to the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, which gave a certain poignancy to the 2-minute silence.

Our association with Lister House continued throughout the year and the arrival of the home's new manager gave me the opportunity to write to him to introduce myself as the Grewelthorpe Branch Chairman. I raised the subject of our long-standing relationship with the home and of our willingness to undertake projects to help improve the quality of life of the residents. One

such project was completed during the Summer when Dom Riley organised a work party to rejuvenate some of the raised beds in the garden which was very much appreciated by the staff and residents. We also received a note from the daughter of one of the residents whose room overlooked one of the bird-feeding tables that this Branch installed 2 years ago, saying how much pleasure that had brought to her father. It is very gratifying to know that our efforts have had the desired effect.

On 6th June, three of our members attended a ceremony at Lister House to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings and a wreath was laid on behalf of the Grewelthorpe Branch. Members of the Branch were also invited to a Cocktail Party at the end of August which was a very good opportunity for me, and some of the other Branch Committee members to meet the Manager and several members of his staff. I am pleased to report, therefore, that our association with Lister House remains solid and that our involvement with it is much appreciated.

Tony Hill organised a Branch visit to the Allerton Waste Recovery Park in August which was excellent and gave a fascinating insight into the highly automated and effective disposal and recycling of waste to produce energy for the National Grid. The group was told by the lady hosting our group that if one spends too long in the plant, it can cause one's hair and clothing to take on a distinctive aroma. However, when the group adjourned to a local pub for lunch, it seemed that no one noticed; but it could have been because they sat in the Beer Garden!

This year's Annual Dinner was held at The White Bear Masham. A total of 30 members and their guests enjoyed another splendid evening in relaxing surroundings. As always, Tony Hill's raffle proved to be a hit with the other diners in the White Bear who willingly handed over their cash with absolutely no coercion from Tony!

On the subject of fund raising for the Branch and The Poppy Appeal, I would like to thank Tony for his efforts not just at the Annual Dinner but also at the weekly quiz held at The Crown Inn throughout the year. I am delighted to announce the total raised by the Branch for this year's Poppy Appeal amounted to £2,516.28.

I should also like to thank our President for his fundraising efforts this year by giving talks to various communities in the local area about his exciting adventures in far-flung places around the world.

In conclusion then, I think it has been a very good year for the Branch. We have completed a most worthwhile project in our own village, leaving a permanent record of our involvement in its history; we continued our close association with Lister House by making a tangible contribution to the quality of life for its residents and we extended the hand of friendship to our neighbouring village by honouring its fallen at our Service of Remembrance.

My thanks to the members of both our Branches for your continued support and finally, my thanks to Robert Forber for agreeing to give us a talk this evening and we all look forward to hearing your presentation on The Royal Army Medical Corps.