



Paris Branch

Newsletter

N° 43 – January 2026



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Chairman's introduction to the January 2026 Paris Branch Newsletter.

Welcome, all our members. I wish you all a very Happy New Year and trust you all had a good Christmas too.

So, what are the Paris branch's plans for the new year? We have some interesting propositions.

One of the most important is our heartfelt desire to see the continuation of our monthly lunches. This, however, must depend upon you, our members, coming to the rescue and helping to provide them. Janet and I have so far done much to maintain the tradition, but this, with our many other responsibilities constitute an unreasonable call upon our time and resources. We would very much like to have a lunch in February, so please let me know if you can help towards preparing it. This would not constitute a permanent responsibility. We feel that a collective approach will be much more successful and foresee members, groups of members, or maybe just a member with a good idea and a couple of friends intervening on a one-off basis, maybe just for one month in the year. Might you have a moment in one of the coming months when you could cobble together a favourite dish in a larger-than-usual quantity to provide a couple of hours of entertainment? For, it must be admitted, with the simplest of physical ingredients, our lunches always invoke a friendly atmosphere and the food on the table is merely an inducement to a certain conviviality which we should hate to lose.

On the practical side, costs are of course refunded from the modest charge made to participants, currently 18 euros for a three-course lunch with one free drink and wine included with the lunch. Our aim is, for a very modest charge, to provide an occasion to meet and socialise – and so far, it has admirably succeeded in this.

This said, we also plan to have more cocktail evenings. The December meeting was very well attended, and apparently much enjoyed.

You will also be interested to learn that we have some talks and film shows provisionally lined up and you will be informed of these, as they occur, in due time. Keep an eye on your newsletter.

We are also planning to have open days which will be advertised in Fusac and the English newspaper the Connexion. We need to make more people aware of what we are and the work that we do. It is hoped that this may attract new members.

We plan to have closer connections with the schools and, hopefully, to get them interested in arranging visits to both WW1 and WW2 battle sites. We are fortunate to have on our committee members who are well qualified to accompany school parties to the various sites and talk about their significance.

Our regular annual ceremonies are outlined in the text below, and we count upon as many of you as possible to attend.

Our President, Col Sean Cunniff is due to leave us, and the Paris Embassy, this February and we wish him well for the future. We hope to will meet his replacement at our January committee meeting.

I continue to keep in touch with both our present Ambassador and our previous Ambassador who you might know is now head of Queens University in Cambridge, having given up a career of 33 years in the Diplomatic service. I am sure you wish her well in her endeavours. I was very pleased to hear that our member Richard Hallows, once Acting Pilot Officer, Oxford University Air Squadron has, among other volunteers who have worked hard for the RBL, been mentioned in the News Year's honours list.

That's it for this month. Please consider if, by any chance you could help provide a lunch in February.

Richard

JANUARY QUIZ 2026



1. Into which sea does the Nile flow?
2. Three continents lie on the Tropic of Capricorn, South America is one, name any of the other two?
3. In American currency 10 cents make a what?
4. Afrikaans was developed from which European language?
5. An Ortanique is a cross between a tangerine and what other fruit?
6. What Italian word describes what can be seen on walls all over the world?
7. What musical features 'Some Enchanted Evening' and 'There is Nothing Like A Dame'?
8. What was the name of the first manned lunar landing mission in 1969?
9. Which boxer was nicknamed 'The Dark Destroyer'?
10. What was the name of Richie Valens' girlfriend?
11. What is the procedure called where an anaesthetic is injected close to the spinal cord?
12. What poisonous oily liquid occurs naturally in tobacco leaves?
13. Who had his first UK top 10 hit with 'Wichita Lineman'?
14. Which sign of the zodiac is represented by a set of Scales?
15. In which country was Rudyard Kipling born?
16. What is the gemstone for September?
17. What instrument has been nicknamed the 'Mississippi Saxophone'?
18. If you get a bottle of wine containing one and a half litres what is that known as?
19. In alphabetical order name the three particles that make up an atom.
20. What is the common name of the 'Auora Borealis'?

Bonus Question – What does the first letter of each answer spell out?

Janet Warby

Notifications

Fiona Anderson of the Embassy suggests that it may be a useful to bring the matter of one of the conditions for a “Carte de Séjour” to the attention of members.

As you may know, during 2026 around 40,000 British nationals who were granted 5-year Article 50 residence permits (Withdrawal Agreement Residence Permits – WARPs) will need to renew them for a 10-year or permanent card.

We have been working closely with the Ministry of Interior to understand the system that prefectures are putting in place to ensure the renewal process is as straightforward as possible.

A Teams session, at the MOI’s request, will take place on **29 January from 12:15 to 13:15**. The link, which should update automatically is below should you care to participate

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 343 148 603 289 15

Passcode: T7Ha3nH3

If you are concerned, you may also find the Living in France Guide on [https://www.gov.uk/](https://www.gov.uk) useful as well as the RIFT and BCC websites for further information.

CEREMONIES AND EVENTS FOR 2026

The following was published in the previous edition but numerous enquiries seem to make it appropriate to repeat it:

<u>Ceremonies</u>			
Date	Month	Venue	Time
26 th	April	Maisons Laffitte Park RAF Memorial	10h30 for 11h00
8 th	May	Various ceremonies	10h30 for 11h00
4 th	August	Arc de Triomphe RBL ceremony	17h45 for 18h30

6 th	September	Pedal to Paris Arc de Triomphe	15h30 for 16h00
15 th	September	RAF Ceremony Battle of Britain Arc de Triomphe	17h45 for 18h30
11 th	November	RBL Service of Remembrance Cathedral St. Louis des Invalides	14h00 for 15h00
<u>Events</u>			
26 th	March	Thank You Cocktail - RBL	18h30 - 21h30
4 th	August	Cocktail Party after Ceremony at Arc de Triomphe	19h30 - 21h30
22 nd	October	Poppy Appeal Launch Coffee Morning at Ambassador's Residence TBC	10h30 – 12 noon
30 th	November	Paris Branch AGM TBC	18h30
10 th	December	Christmas Cocktail RBL Paris Branch TBC	18h30

POPPY PROJECT 2026

Janet reminds us of the joint appeal by the RBL and the BCWA which appeared in last month's edition.

The idea is to knit as many poppies as possible with the eventual aim of creating, by mid-September next, a network suitable for hanging in the clubhouse and perhaps, with the ambassador's permission, at the annual coffee morning. It would also find its place at the 11 November service at St Louis.

It is hoped that not only members but their nearest and dearest might be encouraged to participate in the project.

Instructions, patterns and if necessary, wool, will be forthcoming on demand.

There follows a version for our French members.



Chers membres,

Lors de la dernière « Poppy Season », j'ai vu de nombreuses photos de cascades de coquelicots tricotés accrochées aux clochers d'églises au Royaume-Uni. Cela nous a donné, avec les membres de la BCWA, l'idée que'on pourrait, en collaboration, lancer un projet de coquelicots pour la « Poppy Appeal » 2026.

L'idée est de tricoter autant de coquelicots que possible dans le but final de créer, d'ici la mi-septembre prochaine, un réseau pouvant être accroché dans le club-house, puis peut-être, avec la permission de l'ambassadeur, lors du café annuel, et aussi lors de la cérémonie du 11 novembre à Saint-Louis.

Si vous, votre conjoint(e), votre petite amie, votre fille, une amie (ou ami) souhaitez participer à ce projet, n'hésitez pas à nous contacter. Je vous enverrai un modèle de coquelicot provenant du Royaume-Uni, des instructions et, au besoin, de la laine.

Un grand merci pour votre soutien.

Janet Warby, Hon. Secretary RBL Paris

Karen Martinovitch, BCWA Vice-President

Janet has been investigating the RBL Paris archives. Here is an aperçu of the branch's history

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION PARIS BRANCH ARCHIVES

I have been looking through the RBL Paris Branch Archives which contain elements of interest I feel worth bringing to your attention.

In Paris, in 1921 there was in existence a Veterans Association which met on 4 May to consider the formation of a branch of the British Legion. This was agreed and the Branch started to operate in June of that year. The British ambassador, [Lord Hardinge of Penhurst](#) and [Marshal Foch](#) consented to become Honorary

Presidents of the branch and the first chairman was Rear Admiral [Sir Edward Heaton-Ellis](#).

“The British Legion”, incidentally, was granted the “Royal” title by the Queen in 1971 upon the 50th Anniversary of the organisation’s founding.

Since its 1921 foundation the Paris branch has successively occupied four Headquarters.



The first of these would seem to have been 2 rue de Vienne, by the Gare St. Lazare. We have no picture of this from the period though its imposing entrance still exists, the Legion address is given on a contemporary membership card, also seen here, as is the address of L.B. Andrews Esq. of 33 quai du General Gallieni, whose card it was.

The rue de Vienne address may well have been the home of either the Chairman or the Secretary of the day.

The second headquarters and 'home of our own' was on the boulevard Lannes, on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne. This was in the mid-twenties. It would seem to have been a run-down Scout Hut.



2. A Membership Card of the early days of the British Legion.



3. The Branch Headquarters on the Boulevard Lannes in the mid-twenties.

Our third address

was in rue Boudreau which we first rented then, in December 1953, bought, thanks to the generosity of numerous members. Apparently, according to the History of the Branch, it was originally a dark and dank place described by one of our founding members as resembling the 'black hole of Calcutta'. It was made habitable however and there were two rooms, one rather unhappily monopolised by a huge billiard table. This was the period in which Tony Bennet and his wife Dorothy provided daily curries,

much appreciated by the British population of the entire Opera area and still remembered by those members who were there at the time. However, eventually it became clear that the rue Boudreau premises were becoming too costly to maintain. The two-room layout prevented full use of the premises and there was no heating to speak of. Eventually, the absence of a lift and fire escape made the premises illegal from the point of view of health and safety which precipitated our search for a more suitable base. The search was successful and resulted in our current home in the rue des Acacias.



Amongst the photos which have come to light so far is this one of David Lloyd George signing the Golden Book at the Arc de Triomphe in February 1921 on the occasion of the “Soldat Inconnu” being laid to rest at the Arc de Triomphe.

We do have a 'photo of rue Boudreau but at the present time I am not in possession of it. It is in the Legion in a box which I will go through and will put it in a later Newsletter for all to see.



A Word in your Ear:

The word “**kangaroo**” has long been said to be the answer to an early visitor to Australia who, on seeing an animal of the wallaby family, asked “What’s that?” and got an answer in the local language which meant “I don’t know”, this being carefully noted down in a notebook and destined for lexical posterity in English.

Unfortunately, this particular legend has been debunked but, remembering it, it occurred to me that, given the many times which surprised explorers must have asked the same question, “What’s that?” there must have been other answers which have been misunderstood.

It turns out that there are one or two:

The word “**Canada**” for example, seems to have meant “village”, with a local native taking the question as an enquiry as to the local settlement and the newly arrived visitor having a more spectacular view of his surroundings. Still, there is something rather comforting in naming half the North American continent “a village” – Trump would probably find support for his arguments in this.

“**Orangutan**” comes from Malay *orang hutan* “man of the forest”. It seems that species names are virtually unknown in the Malay language, and this simple description – sufficient for the locals – was attributed by Europeans as a specific term for the species.

“**Piranha**”, however, must go down as one of my favourites. This time the enquiry as to the name of this small (and apparently innocuous) fish seems to have attracted, not a direct answer, but a warning cry which meant “It bites!”. Whether or not the enquirer carefully noted the new appellation in his own blood is not recorded.

M.Y.



The Last Laugh - 65 - A Grumpy Driver

Daisy - You must feel better after that nice lunch Henry.

Henry - You know I don't like stopping when we've got a long way to go. If we hadn't lost an hour over lunch we'd be there by now.

Daisy - Yes but you'd be tired out and go to sleep in an armchair and then you'd be up all night because you'd slept all afternoon.

Henry - And anyway, eating on a trip can make you sleepy and that's dangerous.

Daisy - Oh Henry!

Henry - Yes. What is it now?

Daisy - I've left my glasses on the table in the restaurant ! Turn round. We have to go back.

Henry - Oh No ! We left twenty minutes ago. There and back and we've lost another 40 minutes! We'll never get to Scarborough at this rate. How can you be so stupid.

Daisy - I'm awfully sorry. It's a new pair and they cost nearly a hundred pounds.

Henry - I should hope you are sorry. Here's a roundabout. I guess we've got to go back.

Daisy - Well I've said I'm sorry.

Henry - Being sorry doesn't change the fact that you've just ruined a whole day out with your forgetfulness.

Daisy - Well nobody's perfect, Henry. I don't go on about your driving, do I?

Henry - And why would you. My driving is excellent and if you're thinking about that cyclist we just missed near York, he shouldn't have been hiding behind that bus – stupid idiot!

Daisy - Well the policeman did say...

Henry - He was another stupid idiot. And that's not the first thing you've forgotten.

Remember when you left all the maps behind on the table when we were off to Scotland.

Daisy - Oh Henry. That was years ago. Wasn't it our honeymoon?

Henry - Well anyway here we are back at that restaurant. I'll park here and you can go in and get your glasses - if you can only remember where you left them of course!

Daisy - Yes darling. They're on the table. I remember that quite clearly. I won't be a moment.

Henry - And, by the way, while you're in there, you might as well pick up my hat and the credit card!

M. Y. (65)

January quiz: Answers:



<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mediteranean2. Australia, Africa3. Dime4. Dutch5. Orange6. Grafitti7. South Pacific8. Apollo XI9. Nigel Benn10. Donna	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Epidural12. Nicotine13. Glen Cambell14. Libra15. India16. Sapphire17. Harmonica18. Magnum19. Electron, Neuron, Proton20. Northern Lights <p>Bonus Answer: Mad Dogs and Englishmen</p>
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*Comments & contributions to mfyates@gmail.com
Back numbers: rblfrance.org/ then "Paris Branch Newsletters"*

