



Paris Branch

## Newsletter

N° 46 – April 2026



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## **Chairman's introduction to the Paris Branch April 2026 Newsletter.**

Welcome to this month's newsletter.

It's been a quite month with no official ceremonies. However, we did have a very enjoyable monthly lunch on the 19<sup>th</sup> which was well attended.

We also had a very enjoyable thank you cocktail evening on 26<sup>th</sup> for our Poppy sellers and for new members who were thus able to meet the committee. A raffle was held for the benefit of general fund.



On the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month, we had our first film night which featured the First World War film "1917". Robin our WW1 historian gave an interesting intro for the film and



after the film there was a most interesting question and answer session. The event was much appreciated.

Naturally there were snacks and drinks were available at the bar.

We plan to have more film nights, so keep your eyes open for the next announcement.

Your committee was disappointed that our planned trip to Oradour Sur Glane had to be cancelled due to lack of response from members.

It will be recalled that one of the issues discussed at the last AGM was the desirability of providing such opportunities and we are always open for suggestions if you have any ideas. We would very much like to increase the number of and attendance at the kind of social and ceremonial events we provide and I would remind you that we are not an exclusive organisation and always ready to welcome any guests you care to bring along.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Pedal to Paris takes place this year and I have been in conversation with the organisers in RBL London to discuss how they intend to celebrate the event. It is hoped but not yet confirmed that they might have a member of the Royal family coming over, along with a number of celebrities. So, if this works out it should be an exceptionally interesting event.

This month's lunch, on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> is to be provided by our new member Ifekoya Arinola. You will see the menu below. The 16<sup>th</sup> is the day after this newsletter comes out so, if you would like to come, sign up today!

Richard

## APRIL QUIZ



1. What meteor shower happens over 10 days in April running from approximately April 16-26?
2. Who wrote the poem that gave us the phrase "April is the cruellest month"?
3. In France, April 1<sup>st</sup> is called *Poisson d'Avril*. What trick do people traditionally play on each other?
4. On April 11, 1970, a message from Apollo 13 was sent to Houston: «Houston, we've had a ..... ". What was the next word?
5. What disaster occurred in the Ukraine on April 26, 1986?
6. In April 1998, a federal judge dismissed a sexual harassment case against which American politician.?
7. In what city was the first US Mint established in April of 1792?
8. Argentinian troops invaded what British colony on April 2, 1982?
9. The first man went into space on April 12, 1961. What was his name?
10. On April 18, 1775, the infamous Midnight Ride occurred. One of the riders was Paul Revere. Who was the other?
11. What jolted people awake on April 18, 1906?
12. On April 29, 1992, a not guilty verdict led to 6 days of riots in which American city?
13. Passover is traditionally celebrated in April. What does it celebrate?
14. Which famous Danish fairy tale author was born in April 1805?
15. Which famous bird illustrator, author of [\*The Birds of America\*](#), was born in Haiti on April 26, 1785

Janet Warby

## Correspondence



Laurence David-Grant-Dinand reports that the 1<sup>st</sup> April conference announced in last month's edition of this Newsletter went well. It was attended by a full house and Andrew Brown painted a realistic picture of Edith Cavell, a memorable wartime nurse closely connected with the 15<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, where the conference took place. Executed in 1915 by the occupying Germans, her name has been perpetuated in many ways - a crater on Venus, a Mount in Canada and numerous streets all over France.

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## Events

Due to the lack of interest, it has sadly been decided to cancel the trip to Oradour sur Glane which was announced in the last two issues. Nonetheless, your Committee is anxious to include this kind of event in the Paris Branch annual programme. Suggestions are welcome so do not hesitate to bring your ideas to the attention of the Committee.

## Ceremonies and Other Events Coming Up

(N.B. - TBC = To be confirmed)

Date	Month	Venue	Time
16th	April	Monthly Lunch	1215 for 1230
26 <sup>th</sup>	April	Maisons Laffitte, Park RAF Memorial	10h30 for 11h00

For a fuller account of the year's events click [here](#)  
These are the Ceremonies and Events we know of at the moment. You will be notified of others as information becomes available.

This month's lunch will be on Thursday 16 April.  
That being tomorrow, make a quick decision...



**Don't forget to  
book in for this  
month's lunch.**

**Thursday 16 April  
1215 for 1230  
Only €18 - Pay on the day  
(in cash please)**

Contact Richard at 06 45 10 47 70 or  
richard.neave05@gmail.com  
Reserve early to be sure of a place.  
(Cancellations up to 48h before)



**LUNCH MENU  
Thursday 16 April**

**STARTER-**  
*Macedoine salad with Mayonnaise*

**MAIN COURSE-**  
*Spiced rice with Merlu (hake)  
and ratatouille*

**DESSERT-**  
*Cookies with cream*

*Wine served with the meal  
Coffee or tea*

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### ***The Maiden Trip of the APOLLO***

***Lt Cdr Stewart Miller, one of our most senior members, writes the following account of his experience in the Persian Gulf at a time when Iran was a very different place.***

***Taking us back more than half a century, Stewart offers a fascinating glimpse into life at sea during a pivotal era for the Royal Navy. From the decks of the then-cutting-edge HMS Apollo, he reflects on a career that spanned a very different time in the Persian Gulf. In 1972, the Type 21 frigate represented the pinnacle of British maritime innovation and in this evocative account, Stewart recounts his time aboard HMS Apollo—the most advanced vessel of its day. From his personal experience, he reflects on the changing tides of the Persian Gulf and the evolution of naval warfare over the last 54 years with particular reference to Kharg Island and the Strait of Hormuz:***

The current situation in the Persian Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean leads me to recall events in 1972, 54 years ago now. when I served in that same area, namely Kharg Island in the centre of the Gulf, and the Strait of Hormuz. I was serving in the Royal Navy's latest, most modern and certainly the most expensive Type 21 frigate, HMS Apollo with the first maritime generation of computer command, electronic warfare, underwater, surface and counter air operations systems.



The Apollo, a general-purpose frigate, was completed in 1971, the last of the Leander class. In Glasgow officers and men joined the ship which was nearing completion two months before its commissioning. We sailed her from the maker's yard on the Clyde to Plymouth for final tuning, alignments and command team training in preparation for this and for a work-up at Portland. Deployment to the Far East, the Persian Gulf and South Africa was to follow with a

change of command after one year. My role was that of gunnery weapons officer and operations officer, tasked with advising Command on the operational deployment of the ship in relation to other units in the various locations where such forces were committed.

My first task on arriving at Plymouth was to join an exercise planning group at C in C Fleet HQ in Northwood, integrating HMS Apollo with elements from 18 Group, Nimrods LRMP (Long Range Patrol Aircraft) a/c based in RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus for a joint exercise in the Gulf of Iran in four months' time. This was to plan a series of joint exercises to be known as ARYA 72 (ARYA being an ancient Persian term meaning "noble") with elements of the Imperial Iranian Navy charged with securing the vital oil and natural gas assets located on Kharg Island, the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian waters of the Persian Gulf.

From Northwood the planning group flew to Tehran to plan jointly the exercises with the Ministry of War whose offices were in the centre of the city. At this time, of course, the political situation was quite different from today. The Shah was still in place and was to be ousted only some seven years later. Three days later we returned to Northwood to draft the final plan, and 18 Group staff officers returned to Cyprus. I flew down to Cape Town to rejoin the Apollo which had left Plymouth for Gibraltar and West African ports *en route* for the Cape. Here I rejoined the ship where I briefed the captain on the overall plan. We sailed three days later for the Gulf, calling at Mombasa *en route*, passed through the Hormuz Strait to Kharg Island where the Iranian naval forces, as part of the ARYA 72 were at anchor. A briefing took place at the Island's shore H/Q for those forces taking part the following day. In addition to the original plan, it was decided to include a squadron of Iranian Phantom F4 fighter jets to engage in air defence and low-level attacks on the participating forces on the final day of the exercise. The exercises were a success with all the manoeuvres completed, including the long-range reconnaissance of the Gulf by 18 Group transiting from Cyprus to the Gulf and returning some hours later non-stop. Following the exercise de-briefing on shore at Kharg Island and friendly exchanges with the Iranian Naval staff, Apollo traversed the Gulf on its way to formally visit Dammam Bahrain, Qatar, Dubai and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.

However, Apollo was entering the Sea of Oman when it was signalled to return to Plymouth from the Cape in order to engage with other RN elements under the command of Flag Officer Scotland from Rosyth.

From Plymouth, after a short maintenance period, she was sent, still under the Command of FO Scotland, with four other Leanders, to Iceland, a fellow NATO ally in response to the imminent fish war off the coast of that island. Thus, a planned deployment to Singapore did not take place.

I should mention that, over the period referred to here, I served under two captains. Firstly from Apollo's launch in Glasgow and through its successful harbour and sea acceptance trials, it was under the command of Captain Richard (Dick) Garnons-Williams. He was relieved in 1973 by Captain Richard (Dickie) Fitch who commanded the ship during weapon training at Portland, fleet operations and the Fish Wars off Iceland. Captain Fitch went on to a successful career as vice admiral and as Vice Chief of Naval Staff.

*It seems appropriate to add here two street scenes of Tehran, the first around 1972, the second today.*



*Stewart Miller*

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### **THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION PARISH BRANCH HISTORY Part 3**

After the death of Colonel H.A. Wilsden in 1961, the Legion in Paris carried on with its good works under the chairmanship of Major L. Cunliffe David.

1964 was a landmark, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war, commemorated by many ceremonies in France in which the Paris Branch took a leading part. 1964 was also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of Paris, and there was one particularly poignant ceremony, the funeral of Wing Commander Forest Yeo-Thomas, "White Rabbit", at the Embassy Church, where an address was given by General Koenig. Among those present was the 97 year old General Weygand.

Yeo-Thomas was a hero of the Second World War, and a comparatively young man, but those who had survived the holocaust of Flanders and Picardy in their twenties were now in their seventies, and during the 50's and 60's many of the 'Old Brigade' answered their last Roll Call. Not a few of them, knowing that their end was near, said, as 'Mandy' Mandeville did:

"Say 'goodbye' to all my good friends at the Legion".

However, there were veterans of the Second World War to keep the standard flying and when Major Cunliffe David had to resign in 1968 through ill health, his place was taken by Brigadier Barrie Wilson, DSO, who had served as Military Attaché in Paris. He was aided by such stalwarts as John Taleen, Major General R.B. Stockdale, Barry Lynham, Arthur Cooke, Reg Howarth, Robbie Robinson and George Norbury.

In 1971 the Legion worldwide was awarded the Royal Prefix. In 1972 members of the Legion were honoured by being presented to our Royal Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, on the occasion of her State Visit to Paris and, in 1974, there were special ceremonies to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unveiling of the Memorial Plaque in Notre Dame. On 11<sup>th</sup> November, the Service of Remembrance Ceremony held in Notre Dame was presided over by Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

Another event in November 1974 was the 250<sup>th</sup> monthly luncheon in the series which was started in February 1951. Some of the guests of honour have included a succession of British Ambassadors who have always nobly supported the Legion cause and also Pierre Mendès-France. Madame La Maréchal Leclerc, General Koenig, Georges Carpentier, Maurice Chevalier, André Maurois, Georges Daninos, Forest Yeo-Thomas, Colonel 'Remy', a catalogue of striking names which is by no means exhaustive.

In 1976 Brigadier Wilson stepped down from the chairmanship, which was taken over by Lt. Col. Stanley Edwards, MC, TD., who had been for some years Vice-Chairman with special responsibility for administering the Welfare Fund, and also Editor of the Newsletter.

In 1980 Stanley Edwards stood down as Chairman to be followed by Donald Kinloch, who was in turn followed by Lt. Col. Geoffrey Cox, John Gardner, Gyles Longley, Richard Doggett, Roger Thorn, David Bean and now Richard Neave.

We still maintain a Poppy Appeal each year. We receive annual permission from TRBL London to retain some of the proceeds to respond to urgent local calls for help. The rest of the money raised is sent to TRBL HQ where it contributes towards the many causes which the Legion supports. We can, however, call on this central fund whenever the need arises. Potential beneficiaries are ex-Service-men and women and their immediate family (children up to the age of 25 in full time education). We work closely with the Hartford British Charitable Fund (as it is now called) and they too help our 'clients' when the need arises. This arrangement is specially agreed by TRBL London as, strictly speaking, we are not allowed to give funds to other charities.

In 1981 full membership was extended to serving members of H.M. Forces. Membership is now open to all who adhere to the aims of the Royal British Legion. The aims remain the same as stated by Chairman of the day in 1945, Sir Charles Henderson :

"To promote comradeship; to remember the fallen; to care for the disabled,  
widows

and orphans; to continue service in peace as in war”.

In June of 2009, the Paris Branch moved from rue Boudreau, having 'lived' there for nearly 81 years both as tenants and owners. Our new premises are situated just a stone's throw from The Arc de Triomphe.

We hope you will come and see us from time to time. We maintain the same spirit of our 'forefathers' and still believe in the Legion motto

'Service Not Self'

We still hold monthly lunches and hope to get more members to offer to cook lunches for us. They do not need to be fancy, just wholesome food. Where in Paris can you get a three-course meal plus aperitif, wine and tea or coffee for 18€-20€?

**“WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”**

Janet Warby

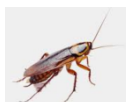


### **A word in your Ear – Tantalise**

Comes, of course, from the Greek myth of Tantalus. A king in Asia minor, he was much favoured by the gods and as a great honour he was invited to dine with them on Mount Olympus. Most disrespectfully he stole ambrosia and nectar (the gods' food and drink which ensured their immortality) and gave them to human beings.

As if this were not enough, he slaughtered his own son, Pelops, cooked him and served the meal up to the gods to see if they were really as omniscient as they claimed.

They were - and Tantalus, who should have seen it coming, was cast into the underworld and afflicted by perpetual hunger and thirst. When he bent to drink water it retreated before his eyes as did the branches hung with fruit which hung before him. Tantalising indeed!



### **The Last Laugh - The Cockroach**

Mary : Where's John? And what are you peeping at in that box?

Jane : Well, you see, John's scrubbing the kitchen down.

Mary : What? You're joking! You've always said he hates household chores. Can't stand housework, you said.

Jane : True enough. Nonetheless he's hard at it now. Have a glance round the door.

Mary : (*looks round kitchen door*) Oh yes. Do you know, he's even scraping out the corners. And about time too I might add!

Jane : Are you implying that I don't keep my kitchen clean?

Mary : Well no, it's clean enough but it's not hardly impeccable.

Jane : Well. I'm not going to spend all my time in the kitchen, Mary. I've got a life to live out there!

Mary : Anyway, what is John up to in there? Why this sudden burst of enthusiasm for a clean kitchen?

Jane : Well, you know he hates insects and he found a cockroach there. He absolutely abhors the things!

Mary : Ugh. Can't stand them myself!

Jane : As soon as he saw it, he galloped off to the supermarket and came back with a load of cleaning stuff and insecticide, and he's been in there scrubbing away ever since.

Mary : Well, what can I say? That's amazing. But you still haven't told me what's in that box you keep fiddling with? What is it?

Jane : Here. Have a look.

Mary : Arghh!

Jane : It's another cockroach to put in the bathroom tomorrow.

M.Y.(70)

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### *April quiz: Answers:*

1. The Leonids	9. Yuri Gagarin
2. T.S; Eliot	10. William Dawes
3. They pin a paper fish to each other's backs	11. The San Francisco Earthquake
4. "Problem"	12. Los Angeles
5. The Chernobyl nuclear explosion	13. The Jews' exodus from slavery to freedom
6. William Jefferson Clinton	14. Hans Christian Anderson
7. Philadelphia	15. John J. Audubon
8. The Falkland Islands	



*Comments & contributions to [mfyates@gmail.com](mailto:mfyates@gmail.com)  
Back numbers: [rblfrance.org/](http://rblfrance.org/) then "Paris Branch Newsletters"*

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