

August 2023



# 'Old Parky' Newsletter of the Junior Leaders Regiment



## Your Committee:

President - Vacant  
Chairman - Iain George  
Vice Chairman/Events coordinator - Simon Crowley  
Secretary - Larry Inge  
Treasurer - David Ormsby  
Membership Secretary - David Ormsby  
Standard Bearer - Ray Ellis  
Newsletter Editor - Barry Mair

## R.E.A

## August 2023

A/54 Squadron

B/82 Squadron

C/66 Squadron

### Message from the Chairman



Dear All,

Firstly, I would like to thank Barry for producing an excellent December 2022 Newsletter which was really good.

I would like to thank the Committee for all their hard work and attending committee meetings every 3 months at the RE museum. The minutes of the last meeting can be found on the last page of this newsletter. If anyone wants to attend a Committee meeting then please contact me.

The committee have been busy organising this year's reunion at the King Charles Hotel on the 30 September 2023 and the 25 anniversary reunion at the Cathedral Hotel Lichfield on the 5 October 2024. Let's have a really good turnout for both events.

The Branch is growing (which is great news) but some of the committee officials have been in the job for a long time and it would be great to see new members on the committee. If anyone is interested in joining the committee, please let me know.

Finally, Gareth Bishop has refurbished the Bench which is now back at the Arboretum and I would like to thank Gareth for the great job he has done. An article on the bench is later in this newsletter.

I hope you all have a great Summer and look forward in seeing you all soon.

Regards

**Iain George**  
Chairman Junior Leaders Branch

### REA (JLRRE) Dinner - Saturday 30 September 2023

You should have all been contacted in late March regarding this year's Annual REA Dinner which is taking place at the King Charles Hotel on Brompton Road in Gillingham.

The outline of the program is as follows:

#### Friday 29th Sept 2023

Informal gathering in the Hotel bar for those that can make it.

#### Sat 30th Sept 2023

14:00 AGM in the Hotel

1900 Re-Union Dinner.

Meet for photo at 19:00 seated for meal at 19:30

#### Sun 01st Oct 2023

Drumhead Service in Brompton Bks starting at 12:00



If anyone has not yet informed David that they wish to attend can you please contact him or send him the attendance form previously sent out.

### The Royal Coronation - Stewart Kitching

Taken from Stewarts Facebook post



Rain and Reign in the same day 6 May 2023. Myself and one of my daughters, Stephanie, were honoured to be one of the 3,800 people who had a seat at the Grandstand at Victoria Memorial for the coronation of The King. The most military event I have ever seen and the standards were so high. It rained nearly all day and the soldiers, Navy, RAF and police never waned.

God Save The King.



Stewart and his daughter Stephanie



## Twenty Years Later - From Pat Derrick

First published in the Sixth Sense in 1985

A group of Royal Engineer Reservists had been tasked to build a Heavy Girder Bridge over the river Leine at Schloss Marienburg and when the Commanding Officer of 25 Engineer Regiment asked his Regimental Sergeant Major to see how things were progressing at a Heavy Girder Bridge site, neither realised that this instruction was to bring about a memorable reunion.

Dawn was gradually breaking over the Schloss and the finishing touches were being put to the bridge when the RSM moved through the stand-to position on his way to have a word with the Site Commander. As he crossed the bridge in the half light he noticed a figure standing in the centre of the newly completed structure and decided to stop and have a chat. Having exchanged the usual pleasantries the RSM made to move on, when the Sapper Reservist said "You don't recognise me then?"



The RSM stopped short and peering under the mop of greying hair and cam cream exclaimed "Pete Waller!"

The last time WO1 (RSM) Pat Derrick and Spr Peter Waller had seen each other was in June 1964 when they were Junior Leaders at Dover. The pair had walked through the gates of Old Park Barracks together in September 1962 to start their respective careers and had lost touch when they left the Junior Leaders Regiment to join "Mans Service".

Peter left the Army in 1974 but, serving on as a Reservist, he was in Germany on exercise taking part in the two week training period that is required from all Reservists. His normal job is test

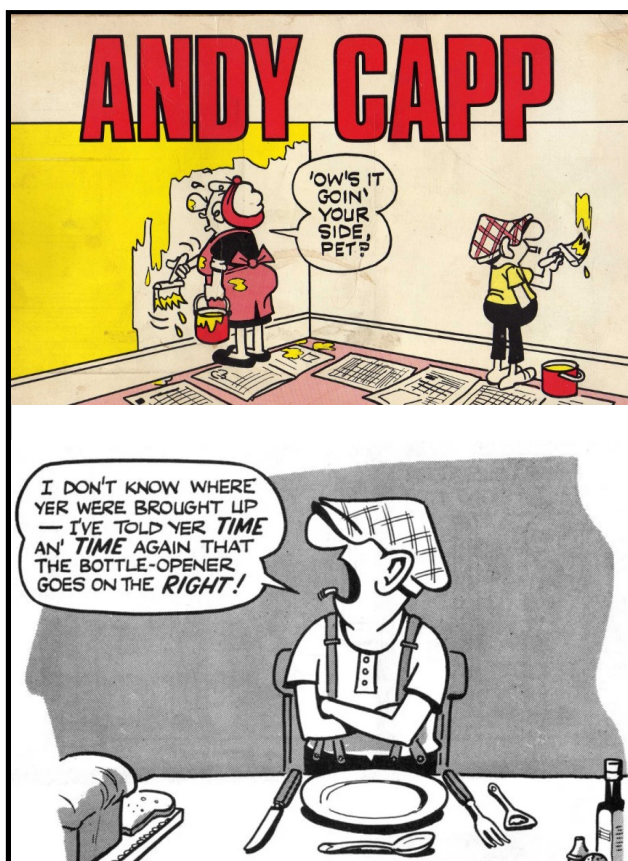
driving for British Leyland, a far cry from a river bank in West Germany and staying up all night building a bridge.

The two old friends rapidly recounted the twenty years since they had last met and were pleased to note that life had gone well for them both. It was a delighted pair that bid farewell to each other on the bridge under Schloss Marienburg as the light



grew stronger and the exercise once more came back into focus.

The chance meeting of the two old friends after such a long time having had the effect of raising the spirits and warming the heart.



## Memories of the Junior leaders Regiment Royal Engineers' by Iain George.

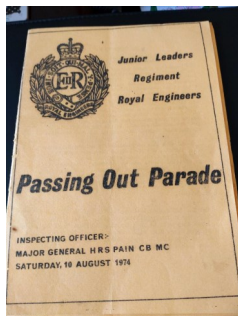
We all have many memories of our time at Dover and Army service generally and most days I think of people I served with, units I served in and places I visited. This can be triggered by many things, looking at photos, anniversary of events and meeting old comrades.

Since I retired in March, one of my jobs which I am doing in slow time, is to clean out the loft. Having been in the house for 30 years, much rubbish has accumulated over time especially when you have a son who lives abroad and is always leaving his belongings with us. I was in the loft the other day and was looking through some boxes and started to come across photos from Dover and reports for each term and an Old Park News. Two things which brought back some memories and I want to share with you is I picked up a pair of mess tins which were clean but inside them was a pair of puttees.



The first questions I asked myself was when was the last time I wore these (I haven't a clue?) and what a pain to put on. When had puttees stopped being worn? Answers to the newsletter editor please.

I next came across my Pass Off Parade Programme for Saturday the 10 August 1974. I remember my Dad driving up from Cornwall in his Austin Cambridge to see the parade and take me home before I went to 3 Trg Regt, Cove to finish my training and then being posted to 36 Engineer Regiment at Maidstone. It was a great day enjoyed by all which I do remember quite well.



The programme is 20 pages and cannot be directly included in the newsletter, but an additional attachment is included of the complete programme which has been replicated 'as is'. It is very interesting to see who is mentioned and wondering what they are doing now. The Junior RSM was Joe Hogan who I served with in 21 Engr Regt from 1984-86 and had not seen him since then until June 2022 at The Royal Hospital Chelsea Founders Day. I also noticed that I was in the programme having been selected for the Junior Army Waterpolo Squad and being awarded Army Colours.

In September 2022 I met up with a few Junior Leaders for the 50th Anniversary of joining the Junior Leaders. One of those was Les Furness who I roomed with at Dover and not seen him since the Pass Out Parade.

My final question is: What have you got in the loft or hidden in a draw which would be interesting to discuss in the newsletter and will bring back memories of your time in the Army?

## Need support or just a chat?

### Sapper Support

Need Help to alleviate the suffering caused by PTSD and associated mental issues.

**Call:** 0800 0407873

**Website:** [www.sappersupport.com](http://www.sappersupport.com)

### Combat Stress

For over a century we've been helping former servicemen and women deal with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

**Call:** 0800 138 1619

**Text:** +44 (0)7537 404719

**E-mail:** [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)

### Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (VRMHP)

Provides assessment and treatment advice for veterans.

**Call:** 0800 032 6258 or

**E-mail:** [dphce-dcmhcol-vmhpm@mod.uk](mailto:dphce-dcmhcol-vmhpm@mod.uk)

### SSAFA

Can help you find the right person to contact

**Call** 0800 731 4880 or +44 (0)207 463 9292

**Veterans Crisis Hotline UK:** 0800 731 4880

Global number: +44 (0)207 463 9292



## Devizes To Westminster Canoe Race - A Potted History with the JL's

### Barry (Baz) Mair

Traditionally, Easter, is a short holiday for most people and for the remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross and his subsequent resurrection. However, for a number of people, Good Friday marks the start of a gruelling canoe event from Devizes in Wiltshire, to Westminster in London. 125 miles along the Kent and Avon canal and the Thames all the way onto the Westminster steps.



The Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Engineers (JLRE) has a long history in the event which was started by a scout group in 1947 as a challenge for local scouts that has turned into this tremendous International event.

Many Junior Leaders have taken part from the 60s with over 120 completing the course which comprises of 77 Locks (or Portages, where you have to get out your boat and run (yes run) around the obstruction and get back in). You are supported by a bank team who follow you down the course feeding you with drinks and food, (there's no time to stop for a 3 course meal), half a mars bar and you are away.



*This is the Canoe team for 1967/8  
Back row Paddy Salmon, Shore (1966), Sab? John Hayden (1967 & 68), Len Bunce (1968), Ron Souter  
Front row, Ralph Parry (1967 & 68), Merrick Henson (1968 with John), Ray Green (1969 when at 35 Engineer Regt), Dave Hadfield (1987 K1 Senior), Eggy Waterton (1967 & 68 plus 5 times from 1970 - 77)*

Many JL's have taken their experiences into Man Service competing many more times, for example, John Hayden has competed a total of 14 times, twice in boy service, then 4 times as a senior followed by 8 times in a K1 (a single boat). His last entry was only 7 years ago in 2016 with Nick Adnitt who were placed 12th. (If John

was 16 in 1967, 49 years later he was still competing, that's dedication!)



*Arthur Haskey and Bill Flook coming into a lock on the Thames in 1966 the only Junior Royal Engineers to win a K2 DW, it may only be junior but from this, results in the RECC being created.*

Some of the excitement of this event rubbed off on others in the regular army, including myself, where WOII Bob Clow (at the time C of W in 28 workshops) trained a group of us to paddle K2s and sent us down the course over the Easter 1983. Unfortunately, and for a lot of entrants that year, we did not complete and retired at the 60 mile point.

That did not stop me, I took up the challenge again in 1986, 87 & 90, completing all 3 times. At the age of 56 I must have had a 'brain fart', because I felt that I needed to do it just one more time in 2012 (must have been spurred on by the Olympics); This time in an open Canadian Canoe and with a female partner. We competed in the Endeavour challenge, which is over 4 days and on the last day, I bumped into, none other than Arthur Haskey who trained me for two of my races. It looks like we just don't know when to stop.



*Me and my paddling partner Miriam, during the Waterside series 2012, which are the preparation race for the DW.*

### 2023 Results

**Crew 373**, Tim Ives & Iain Lawson (RECC) won the SENIOR DOUBLES Services Trophy in 19:42:40 and also won the Army Trophy.

**Crew 724** Oscar Griffiths (RECC) won the SENIOR SINGLES Marsport Shield in 08:03:30



## RE Memorial Bench - By Simon Crowley/Gareth Bishop

Back in March this year at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) bezzzy muckers, Gareth and Simon both sporting hangovers from Simons generous hosting, went to collect the RE bench which was, visually, in a pretty sorry state. Having been decided that it needed to be refurbished and having approached Gareth he gladly volunteered to carry out this important mission.



**Gareth fixing the bench in place**

Once removed, the bench was transported back to Gareth's workshop who set about this important task, keeping in mind his daytime job.

Once in the workshop the bench was given the 'once over' to see what was actually needed. The conclusion was just a really thorough sanding and 4 coats of outdoor furniture teak oil. To be fair, it looked worse than it was and no or little remedial work was needed.

So before any work got under way the plaques that Gareth's dad had originally organised and fitted were removed, and realising they were not in the best shape, replacing them with brass versions would make the



**Bench in final position**

refurbished bench stand out and more befitting to the Junior Leaders. Gareth rang Simon and asked his opinion and he was in agreement and said he would ask the other members of the committee who also agreed. A local engraver was approached to see if it was feasible and at what price.

Over the next few months, Gareth continued to work on stripping it back, rubbing it down, replacing any damaged bits and then re stained & varnished to its current, looking like new. Now in possession of the new brass plaques he was able to replace the old plastic ones.

So, on Friday 2nd June, Iain George, Gareth Bishop and Simon made their way back to the RE memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) where they liaised with the NMA staff who were very helpful in all respects.

The bench was repositioned and can be found at the top right corner of our RE site by anyone who wishes to see it or pause for reflection.

Great and heartfelt thanks must be afforded to Gareth for his fine work in bringing the bench back to life in a far sharper state than it was when it was made - his workmanship is beyond reproach.

His Father was a stalwart member of our branch, an inspiration and a great friend and mentor to many of us - he would have been extremely proud and happy to see the teamwork and resulting addition to the Corps memorial.



**The new plaques**



The NMA is a UK registered charity and 150-acre visitor site on the edge of the National Forest in Staffordshire. Part of the Royal British Legion.

The Arboretum welcomes over 300,000 visitors to site each year, including over 20,000 young people for formal and informal learning visits. Visitors can enjoy discovering over 400 memorials nestled amongst some 25,000 trees.

Each year around 250 events take place on site, from small intimate services of Remembrance to set piece events like Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday, a summer proms and Armed Forces Day.

NMA address: Croxall Rd, Burton-on-Trent DE13 7AR. Entry is free but pre booking your parking space will reduce parking costs.

Further details can be found at [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk)

# The Royal Engineers

To be called a Sapper is an all embracing thing  
One which other soldiers can only ever dream  
A brotherhood of men and other super beings  
A brotherhood to which I belong praised by Kings and Queens.

Take a look at our past for that's where it all starts  
Those heroes of our Corps who served in far flung parts  
And each and everyone of us who served within the Corps  
Holds dear within our hearts all those who went before.

Forty six Royal Engineers have been awarded the VC  
But medals alone don't tell the score as you will plainly see  
For wherever British soldiers fight a Sapper will be seen.

We have Commando Sappers and Airborne Sappers to  
Armoured and Amphibious to name you but a few  
Trades of all sorts truly do abound  
And those called Combat Engineers who fight and move the other troops around.

We blow things up we blow thing down and sometimes sideways to  
And if you ask us really nice we'll do it underwater to  
There's nothing like a real big bang to raise the troops moral  
It sends a shiver down their spines and makes them think of hell.

When called upon we will clear the way  
And then when it's needed do it just the other way  
With mines barbed wire and booby traps  
We'll slow enemy forces down  
And force them to a chosen point known as the killing ground.

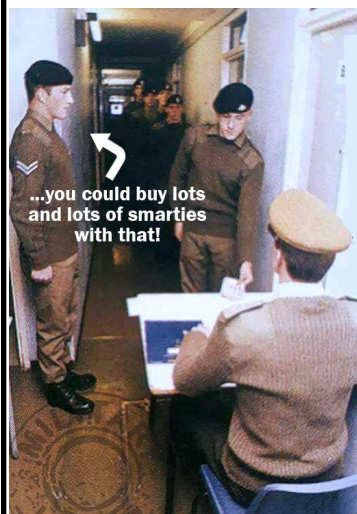
We need no flags with battle honours that flutter in the wind  
The laurel leaves upon our badge just say everything  
Sappers need no second bidding to answer to the call  
The first to arrive and the last to leave are those boys of the Engineers.



40 year anniversary get together - Knox Troop, 82 Sqn, June 83 intake. - Posted on FB by Steven Hope



Pay and Pay Book Correct, Sir.



...you could buy lots  
and lots of smarties  
with that!

**WHEN ENGINEERS GO CAMPING...**



**One for the Chunkys.**

What the editor gets up to between editions



**ROYAL ENGINEERS**

Because there is no problem in the world that cannot be solved by proper  
application of high explosives.



# What has the REA been up to for the first 4 months this year?



## REA Dashboard 01 Jan – 30 April 2023

### Benevolence

Cases received	175
Declined	31
Approved	144
Total assistance	£81,198.68

### Membership

New members	140
New branches	3 (Leicester, Swimming & Water polo, Sappers in the City)
Average age of new members	54 yrs

### Outreach

- Identify existing REA opportunities and make more accessible to the REA Community – **Sapper Games**
- Publicise and highlight opportunities earlier and further afield – **The Cenotaph Parade**
- Understand the branches' and the challenges they face – **Visit branch meetings**
- Identify opportunities to increase the profile of the REA and work with other elements of the Corps – **Sapper Games**
- Provide REA members the agency to create branches without the perceived bureaucratic burden – **Affiliate branches**
- Make it easy for REA members serving and veteran to raise money for the REA – **Fundraising strategy**

### Governance & Finance

**Trustee Appointment and Training** 4 new trustees in 2023 Online courses will be sent to trustees

**Risk Register** Review is underway with draft document under review

**Personnel: retirement recruitment** and new roles Ops Director appointed, recruitment of new Benevolence Secretary and possibly fund manager.

**Legacy** have received £1.126million for 2023 with approx. £400,00 outstanding

### Member Services

Notifications of death	66
Coffin Drapes out	32
Medical discharge notifications via APC	29* (Nil same period 2022)
Obituaries - Sapper magazine	63

### Digital Marketing

Website	Users – 12k 41.1% Webpage Views – 34k 13.6%
Facebook	33 new page likes Reach/engagement 186k 224%
Instagram	74 new followers Engagement/reach 332%

## REA NEWS

**HQ REA** has created an online platform called Sappercom. Sappercom provides a secure, password protected online location where REA members can; discuss ideas, advertise events, resolve challenges and access exclusive. To access SapperCom individuals are to go to: <https://sappercom.com/>.



**REA Badge and Corps Badges.** There is no change to any of the insignia that the REA wear, parade or use on stationery. HQ REA does not mandate on what members wear. It is an individual's choice whether they choose to wear, parade or be emblazoned with the ER II cap badge or the CR III cap badge. Branch standards are not to be replaced until such time that they become unserviceable. The REA badge remains unchanged.

## REA EVENTS

**Corps Memorial Weekend 15th – 17th September 2023.** Details of the Corps Memorial Weekend have been published and sent to branch Secretaries. A redacted version of the administrative instruction can be found <https://www.reahq.org.uk/events/corps-memorial-weekend-2/>

**National Standard Bearers Competition 16th September 2023.** The National Standard Bearers' Competition is to be held at Brompton Barracks, Chatham during the Corps Freedom of Medway Memorial Weekend at 1030hrs Saturday 16th September 2023.

**Annual General Meeting 7th October 2023.** The Royal Engineer Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at 1330hrs, Saturday 7th October 2023 in the Trafalgar Room, Victory Services Club. This will include the Sapper VC Dinner.

**Sapper Sunday, Royal Hospital Chelsea.** This will take place at 1000am on Sunday 8th October 2023 at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

For full details of any or all of these events please log onto <https://www.reahq.org.uk/>

# What's happening in your Branch

**The last meeting was held on 14th of May 2023**

## **MATTERS ARISING**

- (1) Iain George raised the subject of the vacant Branch Presidents post. There is no resolution to date so the subject is held in abeyance. Iain agreed to cover both President and Chairman for the time being.
- (2) Iain confirmed that Nick Gunnell replaced him as The Operations Manager REA. Nick Gunnell wishes to meet our Branch at some stage in the near future. It was suggested a suitable time would be our next AGM and possibly invite him to our annual dinner.
- (3) It was confirmed that our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM and Dinner is to be held at the Cathedral Hotel Litchfield in 2024.
- (4) Iain raised the subject of inviting VIP guests to the 2023 and 2024 AGM and dinners. He stated that he had put some thought to the subject and come back with ideas later in the meeting.

## **BRANCH CHAIRMANS REPORT**

Iain George, Branch Chairman briefed the Committee on the following points:

Iain gave an overview of possible policy changes within the REA, in particular a need to realigning REA branch areas geographically. This currently is an ongoing exercise with a specific committee dealing with the subject.

Iain alerted the committee to an REA initiative called "Sappercom.com" the purpose of which to the Committee at this stage was unclear. We are encouraged to try it out.

Iain briefed that the Sapper Games 2023 will be held in July Chatham. REA retired members will be participating in some of the sports.

Iain expressed his pleasure at the increase in Branch membership and our Branch exposure on Social Media and FACEBOOK which has to a large degree has contributed to recruiting.

## **VICE CHAIRMANS REPORT**

Simon Crowley confirmed the menu and that planning for the 2023 AGM and Dinner was well in hand and the date of 31<sup>st</sup> September 2023 is confirmed with the King Charles Hotel Chatham.

Simon further confirmed that he had booked the Cathedral Hotel Litchfield for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary AGM and Dinner. Dates were confirmed as 4, 5, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

Iain asked if the deposit had been paid to the King Charles Hotel yet. Simon was unsure but would progress the subject with both the hotel and Dave Ormsby.

Iain further asked about the amount of wine per table and was assured it was the same provision as normal. Iain then thanked Simon for his hard work and proposed that the August Committee meeting be held in the King Charles Hotel.

A short discussion was had to confirm the change of location from Dover to Litchfield for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary AGM and Dinner. As the membership had been canvassed for their views and no response received the Committee's decision is upheld.

Ray raised the issue of the King Charles Hotel at our last dinner there. We were moved after dinner into a smaller room which was crowded and uncomfortable. Iain confirmed that after discussion with the Manager we will remain in the room set aside for our dinner this year.

Simon asked if we had a cut off date for hotel booking to book accommodation. Based on previous experience a cut off date of Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September was arrived at.

## **TREASURERS REPORT**

The treasurers report was summarised and read to the meeting.

Iain said he was not sure if the REA annual grant will be paid to Branches this year but would enquire.

Iain further highlighted that our Branch charity had ring fenced an annual sum of £100 which has not been allocated. Ideas for where it should be targeted are welcome.

## **THE BRANCH SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Larry Inge reported that he had not received any correspondence since the last meeting.

REA returns are up to date.

## **THE BRANCH STANDARD BEARERS REPORT**

Ray Ellis presented his report. Events he attended and will attend where the Branch Standard was and will be paraded are as follows:

- (i) Victory in Europe Service – Dover 7 May
- (ii) Armed Forces Day – Basildon 24<sup>th</sup> June
- (iii) Victory over Japan – Dover 6<sup>th</sup> August
- (iv) Corps Memorial Weekend – Chatham 17 Sept
- (v) Fought for Victory Drumhead Service – Gravesend 24<sup>th</sup> Sept

Iain asked if the Branch Standard was still in good condition. Ray replied that all was well. Iain further said that if the Standard was to be replaced due any REA policy change funding would possibly be required from the Branch.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Congratulations were expressed to Iain on his recent award of the REA Badge of Merit.

Simon briefed the Committee on the imminent return of the Memorial bench to the NMA. It is now fully refurbished and has new replacement brass plaques attached. Simon and Gareth Bishop are planning to reinstate the bench at the NMA in the next couple of weeks. Further information was advised that a new Corps flag had been produced bearing King Charles III cypher and that a new flag has been raised at the corps memorial at the NMA. Kevin Bazeley was instrumental in gathering local REA members to attend and mark the occasion.

## **DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023 at 1200hrs in the King Charles Hotel Chatham.





If you have any articles for inclusion in the Winter issue please forward to:  
[JLRRE.Newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:JLRRE.Newsletter@gmail.com)

Your editor for this edition has been:

Barry (Baz) Mair