

British Legion

In June 1932 Danehill was bustling with people amid a never ceasing flow of traffic as members of the British Legion gathered for the ceremony of dedicating a new Standard. This was the gift of Mr Alfred Wagg who was the owner of the Isle of Thorns, at that time a summer camp at Chelwood Gate for London boys.

Well over 200 British Legion men connected with about 15 branches were present. Fletching was represented by Mr A E Gilliam, Horsted Keynes, by Mr W Baxter, Nutley, by Mr T Turner and West Hoathly by Mr J Day and there were many others.

The first part of the ceremony was held in the school field and the local troop of boy scouts was led by Mr W J Bird - Scoutmaster (who was also Headmaster of Danehill Primary School. Mrs Bird who was the Cub mistress and Mrs Harrison, in connection with the Girl Guides and Brownies, also paraded.

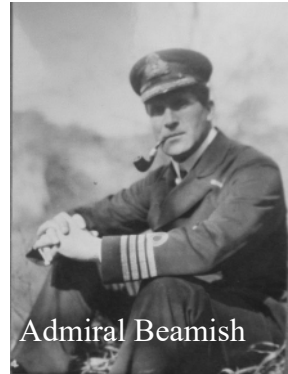


The Major, the Right Hon. Rupert Barrington, who was Vice President of the Danehill and Chelwood Gate Branch, presented the Standard on behalf of Mr Wagg. (This is a bit odd as the local British Legion calls itself the Danehill and Chelwood Gate Branch, but the Standard is clearly Chelwood Gate and Danehill).

The Standard was received by Rear Admiral Beamish, President of the Branch and was placed on the "Carry" borne by Mr G Wilkins who was the Standard Bearer - he was supported by Mr William (Bill) Francis who lived at Stratton Cottage, Chelwood Common. Bill was a British Legion supporter all his life. Mr F Dann also assisted.



Admiral Beamish expressed grateful thanks to the various branches and others who had come for the occasion and also to the Vicar, the Rev H E Stuart (Vicar of Danehill from 1930-1932), for allowing them to utilise the evening Service at the Church.



Admiral Beamish

Major Barrington, before handing the new Standard to Admiral Beamish, apologised for the unavoidable absence of Mr Wagg. Rear Admiral Beamish voiced thanks to Mr Wagg who he said was inclined to hide his light under a bushel. It was a very bright light and one much appreciated in the Parish. The Admiral went on to point out that balanced and thoughtful patriotism, love of country, and self sacrifice were nothing to be ashamed of but rather to be cultivated by every British citizen. This was an occasion when they should all feel proud of the British Legion and all that it stood for and also to remember their fallen comrades and perhaps bear in mind the wording of the couplet he saw on a war memorial "We

that live
amid
Sussex
pastures
green -
remember
them and
think of
what might
have been"



The West
Hoathly
British
Legion
Branch

Drum and Bugle Band under Sergeant Major E Brown sounded the Salute, the Standards being dipped in salutation to the new Standard.



Mr Day

Jill Rolfe.

This is Mr Day [left] who was the Standard Bearer for West Hoathly with his daughter on his knee.

The Standard continues to be paraded on Remembrance Sunday and at the special Armistice Day in 2018 it was carried by Michael Virtue (below).

My thanks to the late Ron Wenham and the late Peter Kirby also to Mary Cocking, John Ralph of the West Hoathly Local History Archive, Ken Francis and to Michael Virtue.

