



Gardman are proud to be a Thank You partner to the RBL in Centenary Year

Today the Royal British Legion has launched a movement to say 'Thank You' to the First World War generation who served, sacrificed, and changed our world. Gardman have worked with the Royal British Legion now for several years as the products we produce resonate with consumers to support this charity. The Royal British Legion is encouraging the public to use the last 100 days before 11 November to take part and find ways of saying 'Thank You'.

"Last year we raised over £280,000 for The Royal British Legion with our bespoke charity products. In this centenary year we want to build on the success of our 2017 campaign and raise over £400,000 in 2018. Our two leaf poppy products are being well received by garden centres who are creating absolutely stunning displays getting behind this charity." said Will Hemmings, Marketing Director

All communities are being encouraged to join the movement by expressing their thanks this year, with 45 high profile organisations already supporting the movement. Partners include Gardman, English National Ballet, Diwali in the Square, Highclere Castle, GCHQ, Cadbury, Sainsbury's, M&S, the Coventry Building Society, the RFU and many others. Over 250 community events have been organised so far to say a mass 'Thank You' to those who put Britain on the path to becoming what it is today.

To support the launch, 'Thank You' partner Ancestry UK will be offering free access to military records from 6-9 August, to allow the public to research their own family history, while their WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards 1914-1920 collection will be free to access from 6 August to the end of the year. This collection is the most complete listing of people who fought in the British Army in WW1.

'Thank You' will honour not only the 1.1 million British and Commonwealth Armed Forces who lost their lives in the First World War, but also those who played their part on the home front, and those who returned to build a better life for the benefit of generations to come.

To launch the movement, the Legion has created a giant installation of 8ft high illustrated letters, which will be on London's South Bank on 3-4 August before touring to other cities in the UK later this month. The public will be invited to write their own personal messages of thanks directly onto the installation.

Sir Michael Morpurgo, a 'Thank You' Ambassador, will this year release *Poppy Field*, a new book looking at the war's resonance through history. Sir Michael said: "The First World War is, in a strange sort of way, the most iconic of all wars. From the depths of its horror, it brought out an extraordinary collective effort and contributed to some of the most meaningful cultural shifts in human history.

"To the farmers who gave up their horses to the war effort; to the women who kept our home fires burning; to the Sassoons and the McCraes whose work has shaped our understanding of conflict; we should indeed say 'Thank You'."

Charles Byrne, Director General of The Royal British Legion, said: "We all have a connection to the First World War, for me it is Private Ross Ryan, my grandfather, and we all have a reason to say 'Thank You' to this special generation.

“Whether your personal ‘Thank You’ is an event dedicated to those who made a difference in your community, a visit to a place of significance, or a simple tweet, there’s no limit to the ways people can take part. We are making a plea to every single person across the UK to get involved and take a moment in this very significant year to say ‘Thank You’.”

For further information and to find out how you can get involved in the ‘Thank You’ movement, please visit rbl.org.uk/thankyou.

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- A focal point of activity for the movement will be the weekend of Sunday 28 October, when the clocks go back an hour. Daylight saving time was introduced by Germany and then the UK during 1916 to minimise artificial lighting and save fuel for the war effort, so it is particularly relevant for the ‘Thank You’ movement.
- Legacies born out of the First World War include:
 - The Royal British Legion, founded in 1921 by veterans of the conflict and their families, and dedicated then as now to the welfare, memory and interests of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.
 - The greater role of women in the workforce and public life which contributed to the first women gaining the right to vote in 1918.
 - Men without property, many of whom had fought in the war, were also given the right to vote in the same year.
 - Advancements in medicine such as blood banks, x-rays and reconstructive surgery.
 - Development of everyday products such as the wrist watch, the trench coat, or the humble teabag.
 - Inspiration for arts which gave us war poets like Owen and Sassoon, compositions by Elgar and Vaughan Williams, and the imagery of Nash and Sargent. JRR Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings trilogy was also inspired by his service on the Somme.
 - The birth of the poppy as a symbol of sacrifice and of hope – it was the subject of John McCrae’s poem *In Flanders Fields*, written following the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915.

The Royal British Legion’s work is encapsulated in its motto: Live On – *to the memory of the fallen and the future of the living*. The Legion is the nation’s biggest Armed Forces charity providing care and support to all members of the British Armed Forces past and present and their families. The Legion champions Remembrance and safeguards the Military Covenant between the nation and its Armed Forces. It is well known for the annual Poppy Appeal, and its emblem the red poppy. www.britishlegion.org.uk