

# Armed Forces Flag Raising Days

*Sir Peter Bottomley MP*

*Worthing Herald Article*

*23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022*

Sunday's Service at the Worthing War Memorial marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Falkland Islands and the islanders. I watched as Mayor Councillor Henna Chowdhury led the wreath laying.

Remembrance was also held in Staffordshire at the National Memorial Arboretum. Speaker Lindsay Hoyle had been in the Falklands where the government appreciated that anniversaries of traumatic times can trigger feelings of anxiety, sadness and difficult thoughts.

The brave sacrifices of those who restored freedom allowed the islanders to regain control of their own destiny, shaping their recent successes. More than surviving, they are thriving. Those born since 1982 understand they have benefited from the bravery of others; they will build on the legacy.

On Monday at the Armed Forces Flag Raising Ceremony in New Palace Yard by the Elizabeth Tower, as Father of the House, I sat by the Speaker close to the children in the Voices of Armed Forces Children choir. They showed talent, singing Stand Up and Welcome Home. Three children read a number of very moving poems.

Cadets and reservists also took full parts in every ceremony. Reserves are about a sixth of our Armed Forces personnel. They help protect our security at home and overseas. They add special capability in medical, cyber and other specialist fields. Reserves Day was on Wednesday, before this Saturday's Armed Forces Day.

In the United States Veterans Day is a public holiday. It is equivalent to our Remembrance Day, marking the 1918 November Armistice. Our day, last Saturday in June, is close to 26 June, the day the first investiture of the Victoria Cross in Hyde Park 165 years ago.

Pacifists and anti-war campaigners too can be brave. Quakers had ambulance units on the battlefields.

Last Friday was a different day and a day of differences. I joined Tim Loughton MP to see the Rampion wind turbines in action. We can join in welcoming increased production of renewable energy. It is crucial that we work together to ensure that future developments take into account the concerns and views of communities and ensure that they are appropriate as we transition towards a low-carbon energy supply.

I later visited the Buzz Gala Bingo Hall to celebrate National Bingo Week. I congratulated Sue Gobey and the team for their Ukraine Humanity Ticket sales aiming to fundraise £15,000 for the Emergency Appeal for Ukraine. We are grateful for the support locally for so many Ukraine refugees who continue to arrive and we hear are settling well. Sue has previously helped to raise over £11,000 for the Sussex Air Ambulance. The caring Bingo Hall staff help to foster a familiar sense of community.

At Worthing's Slake Spirits distillery, I was impressed by Dr Thomas Martin-Wells's knowledge and skill in making unique artisan gin as well as his ambitions to further the aims of his small business at the centre of Worthing. After a final jolly home visit to terminally ill constituent, who was a long-serving nurse and advocate for whistle-blowers in the NHS, I was in East Preston for a drop-in advice session before getting involved in letters for postal voters.

Rail users have felt the pain of strikes on Tuesday of this week and will continue to be affected all week. Consideration for customers should be paramount when those providing services make their point. It is wrong that the country is held to ransom so soon after our travel freedoms are reinstated following Covid19. Students taking A Level and GCSE exams – the first since 2019 because of Covid19 – should not have the added stress of travel to school concerns; workers should be supported back to workplaces. I have urged Ministers and unions to continue negotiations and to be open to working towards agreement.