



The Editor Writes

It is to be hoped that there will be a good attendance at the Branch Autumn Dinner in October. We are returning to the Market Harborough Golf Club where we were looked after so well last year. This is a happy occasion and an opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow Legionnaires. If you would like to be there but have no means of transport, please let Glenys or Pat know (numbers on page 8) and every effort will be made to help solve the problem.

We report on proposals to build on the firm foundations laid by Brian Marshall to strengthen our association with the local youth organisations. This is a matter of prime importance and must be addressed urgently if the Royal British Legion is to exist for future generations - including young Christopher on the opposite page.

My friend and chauffeur, Norman Banting, and I enjoy a tour of the villages delivering *In Touch* each month, especially if the weather is fine. When I popped in to John Ballard's house in Great Bowden, I spotted a poem displayed in a frame. I borrowed it, with a couple of photos, and you can read John's poetry on page 6.

As we always knew they would, Lady Members have come forward to pick up the reins until Joan Mc-Millin returns to good health. Glenys and Pat are looking after the Dinner arrangements and Vida Edwards and Margaret treated us to an excellent buffet at the August meeting. We thank all four of them.

Gary Farnsworth

It is with much sadness that we report the sudden death of Gary on Friday, 19 August, at the age of 37. A well-known character around Market Harborough, Gary was invariably cheerful despite having suffered a lifetime of ill-health and being confined to a wheelchair. He was an enthusiastic member of the Branch and a tireless worker for the Poppy Appeal.



THURSDAY 13TH OCTOBER 7.30 FOR 8PM
MARKET HARBOROUGH GOLF CLUB

Be sure to book your place for an enjoyable evening with fine company and good food.

MENU

Coriander & Carrot Soup
Melon Balls
Prawn Cocktail
(with brown bread & butter)



Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding
Breast of Duck
(with Fruit of the Forest sauce)

Salmon
(with Dill & Lemon sauce)



A selection of desserts
Coffee and mints

Vegetarian and special dietary requirements are available on request

Tickets, price £13 each, will be on sale at the next meeting or may be ordered by telephone, along with your choice of dishes, from Pat Middleton (01858 445847) or Glenys Hocking-Davies (01858 467835).

Farewell to our Padre

There will no doubt be a good number of the Branch membership in St Dionysius Church, Market Harborough at 6pm on 4 September. This will be the final service in the town to be taken by our Padre, the Reverend Canon Moody, who is moving to pastures new.

Members agreed at the August meeting that, in recognition of the esteem in which he is held, the Padre should be presented with his Royal British Legion stole as a keepsake along with a certificate of appreciation of his service to the Branch.

Festival of Remembrance

Because of increased costs and the withdrawal of funding, this could be the last year in which the Festival is held in Leicester. With tickets costing £11, the show at the de Montfort Hall on 5 November, features the Band of the Scots Guards and promises, as always, to be a memorable occasion.

Members who wish to attend could avail themselves of transport being arranged by Duggie McMeeken. If you would like to know more, please contact Duggie on 01858 463203.

Branch News Extra

Donations made to the Poppy Appeal in memory of our dear friend, Janet Sewell, amounted to the magnificent sum of £324.

• • • •

The collection made at the service of thanksgiving at St Nicholas' Church in Little Bowden on Sunday 10th July raised £190 for the Poppy Appeal. A donation by the Royal Naval Association brought the total, in typically ship-shape and Bristol-fashion, to a tidy £200.

• • • •

A message of sympathy will be sent from the Branch to the widow of Cpl Mark Payne, a resident of Market Harborough who died in a road accident in Germany. He was accorded a funeral with full military honours.



Social Team The vacancies caused by the temporary inability of Joan and Mary to undertake their usual efforts on behalf of the Branch have been filled. Glenys Hocking-Davies and Pat Middleton have kindly assumed responsibility for the Autumn Dinner arrangements (see page 8). Members are asked to support the ladies in their task.

Tasty Meeting Members attending the August meeting enjoyed an excellent buffet prepared by Vida Edwards and Margaret Whitehead.

Youth Theatre Members of the theatre will perform 'We'll Meet Again' on 9/10 September at Robert Smyth School. Tickets for senior citizens cost £5.

The 65th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain The service will be held this year in St Nicholas' Church, Little Bowden, at 10.45am on 18 September. George Fleming will carry the Branch standard.

Volunteer Sought The County Field Officer is hoping that a volunteer will be willing to visit an elderly long-term prisoner who served in the RAF. Further details may be obtained from Vida Edwards.

Patient Information Forum Meetings to be held this autumn will give the public an opportunity to put questions to representatives of the Primary Care Trust Board. Glenys Hocking-Davies (01858 467835) is a member of the Forum and she is willing to receive questions from Members who are unable to attend meetings in person. The dates of the meetings will be announced soon and details will appear in the local press.

A Gentle Reminder September is the month when subscriptions become due. If you have not made arrangements for payment yet, you are requested by Tony Johnson, the Branch Treasurer, to do so as soon as possible. Prompt payment makes his life so much easier!



The Diary

Please read the important message on page 2.

SOME DATES TO KEEP FREE

- 13 Oct Branch Autumn Dinner at MH Golf Club (see page 8)
- 5 Nov Branch Coffee Morning
- 5 Nov Festival of Remembrance in Leicester (see page 1)
- 11/13 Nov Remembrance Services in MH
- 19 Nov Remembrance Concert, Baptist Church

The date of the next meeting is September 14th

Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the downstairs Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm



The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

HOLDER OF THE LISTER CUP

Reg. Charity 219279

www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net

In Touch

Issue 83 August 2005

In Touch on-line

www.in-touch.ukvet.net

Editor

George Seward : 01858 433873

18 Charles Street,

Market Harborough, LE16 9AB

e-mail : g.seward@btinternet.com

Branch Contact Numbers

Welfare

Vida Edwards : 0116 279 3729

Hon. Secretary

Betty Ramsay : 01858 434923



Working on the Railway



The Memories of Sidney Read

Sid brings to a close his account of his life during the heyday of the railways.

The Railway Today

And now an up-to-date story. My grand-daughter who lives in Market Harborough decided with her friend to go to Birmingham shopping. They went to Rugby to get on the train there which was a half hour ride to Birmingham. They parked their car and went to the booking office and bought their tickets and asked a young woman in the office which platform they needed, and she told them the wrong platform. What was she thinking about – how do these people get these positions. My grand-daughter and friend didn't go to Birmingham they were taken to Coventry and had to change trains there. It took them 3 hours to get to Birmingham from Rugby – what a joke – what's the matter with the railways and the people who are in charge.

Having said that, my daughter and her husband decided to go to a Show in London and they went to Kettering and parked their car in Kettering and paid £52 each first class to go to St Pancras. They had only just got seated when a woman with a crowd of children came and sat down in the compartment and it was given out over the tannoy that they were short of a coach. When you think about it - £52 first class and get this sort of treatment! Where are the people who are in charge. They seem to be getting a lot of money for doing absolutely nothing.

1984 - The End of the Line

I spent my final days on the railway working at Wistow signal box, a lovely box in the middle of the countryside but accessible only by either walking, or

riding my motor-bike for a quarter of a mile down the line. This box overlooked the Kibworth golf course and I spent many amusing times watching in disbelief at golfers taking their place on the tee, aiming down the fairway, only to send the ball straight onto the track in the opposite direction. The language at times was unrepeatable.

When I began my career on the railway at fourteen, my education had been pretty limited. Getting to school in Harborough from Welham gatehouse was a risky business during winter months, the road often flooded. But my education really began as a railwayman. Hours spent in the signal box, often alone, gave me the opportunity to read and learn. From books I taught myself bee-keeping, wine-making and social and political history. Working out timesheets, overtime, travelling time etc., etc and negotiating with the wages clerk in the office at Harborough improved my arithmetic enormously. Extremely comprehensive rule books



Hallaton Station in Victorian times.

had to be learned by heart. You never forgot that you were responsible for passengers' lives. On a less serious side my darts improved to such an extent that I was at one time the Welland Valley Darts Champion!

My wife and I still live in the station cottages at Hallaton where we have lived since 1940. My wife was born in Hallaton and used the railway to travel to school each day. Whilst my son and two daughters were growing up we used the train to travel everywhere. My young daughter would travel safely on her own from Hallaton via Market Harbor-

ough, changing trains at Rugby to visit her grandmother in Birmingham. On a Saturday the children would travel to Market Harborough to the Orion cinema to see a film, taking sandwiches with them. The station was a most important part of the village with people travelling to work in the morning and returning at night and cattle being shipped in and out of the cattle dock.

We kept poultry and goats beside the railway and pigs at the bottom of the garden. The goats regularly got out onto the line and when the trains came through they would give us a 'toot' on the whistle to let us know we needed to go and rescue the goats. If the pigs got out they used to head straight to the platform to "rootle" up the flower beds, a cause of annoyance to the station master.

The children learned to play tennis against the station wall, played hopscotch on the pavement outside the booking hall, picked cowslips and violets in the coalyard and strawberries along the railway bank. All the bean and pea sticks for the garden came from the railway bank and most of the rabbits and pheasants for dinner. When I was on duty in the signal box at Hallaton my wife or one of the children would bring a hot dinner to me.

The station building and signal box were pulled down when Mr Beaching made his famous cuts and everything bar the weighbridge hut where the starlings nest was carted away. A bungalow now stands where the station once stood. The swallows that used to build their nests under the station eaves still return every Spring but in fewer and fewer numbers.

I retired early in 1984 following a mowing accident when I suffered a badly broken leg. My grandson inherited my railway topcoat, a cause of much hilarity to his school mates; my railway cap has been to many a fancy dress party but my daughter has kept my "buttons" as a souvenir of where it all began.



If Sid's story has stirred a few memories for you, the editor - and, of course, Sid - would be very pleased to hear from you.



**T
E
N
T
H**

They fought on the beaches on D-Day
At Caen and at Flers; at the Seine;
They fought through Belgium and Holland:
The Escaut canal was their gain.

They fought at the borders of Deutschland,
On the Maas exceeded their fame.
They went forward - never retreated;
The advance to the Rhine was the same.

They forced the approaches of Bremen,
Where Germans resisted they went.
They fought the Hun 'til defeated,
The power was finally spent.

They fought in the van of the victors,
Forever their glory will live,
These are the men we have followed,
The men of the British Third Div.

The Men Of The Third Div. John Ballard

Celebrating Victory in Europe, John's poem tells the story of the Third Division's advance in the months after D-Day.

The Tenth was the Field Dressing Station in which John, seen right, served throughout this period.

The photograph below was taken in Egypt during John's earlier service in North Africa when the Third Division was under the command of General Montgomery.



An aspect of the Appeal in which we are extremely weak is collecting from house to house. Large areas of the town have not been covered at all in recent years so there is a tremendous potential for increasing our figures. Daytime calls can be made on Saturdays and Sundays so the dark evenings can be avoided.

If you, or a friend - who, incidentally, doesn't have to be a Legion member - would like to cover some houses in your locality, please let me know.

I've arrived and to prove it I'm here!

It's not often we get the chance to congratulate a Branch Member on the birth of a baby.

So let's give a really warm welcome to Hilary Brazil's bonny new son!

Baby Christopher arrived on the scene at 20.59 on 27th July in Peterborough Maternity Hospital, weighing in at 6lb 13oz. Needless to say, he is the apple of Grandma's eye; who, by the way, is our Secretary, Betty Ramsay.



Youth Participation

Following the affiliation of the Branch to the Army, Air Training Corps and St John Ambulance Cadets, a proposal was discussed at the August meeting regarding the formation of a Branch Youth Section. It was further proposed that a standard be provided with the cost of about £500 being met by the Branch. Peter Wilson said the cost could be met from a recent £1000 bequest, knowing the donor would support youth participation.

Norman Banting was concerned that it would be an expensive way to gain a few more members and Margaret Whitehead questioned whether the Legion offered enough for young people. Dougie McMeeken believed that £500 was a reasonable price to pay to encourage youth membership.

Tom Jeacock formally proposed that a youth standard be purchased. This was seconded by Sylvia Saunders and carried by a majority.

THE ROYAL
LEGION

The Poppy Appeal 2005/2006

*Dougie McMeeken, Appeal Organiser
01858 463203*

Supplies of poppies have been delivered to the Appeal headquarters, otherwise known as the portakabin. The great value of the 'kabin for storage in a central location will soon be apparent once again.