



Editorial

FOR MANY MONTHS it has been said at Committee and branch meetings that the Treasurer and indeed each office holder should have a deputy to cover for absence and to allow for a smooth take-over on retirement. This is the theory but through lack of volunteers, inadequate planning or insufficient persuasion it hasn't happened.

Last year there was anxiety over the appointment of a Poppy Appeal Organiser until Tom Jeacock volunteered. It has been the same since Tom said that he would not be able to continue in the job. Fortunately that worry was lifted at the April Branch meeting when Tony Johnson offered to take over. Thank you Tony and we wish you every success. Let us hope that when you retire there will be someone ready to take over from you. Again it was a bad start to the year when there was no obvious successor for the Welfare Officer or for the Social Secretary.

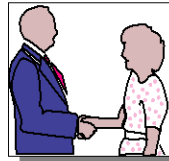
In a voluntary group the management and organisation of people, jobs and responsibilities is much more difficult than in the commercial world. Perhaps it could be made easier for us if instead of members being asked to volunteer for specific jobs they were just asked to say if they would be prepared to become more involved with the Branch. This approach might encourage newer and younger members not to be deterred by lack of experience of Legion affairs. They could be prompted to ask how their own skills, experience and interests could be used in the Branch and then asked to help in activities where they would be most useful.

What prompts these musings is the announce-



11th April Buffet

THE "SOCIAL EVENT" following the last Branch meeting was simply billed as a "Buffet". Thanks to the hard work of Irene Blissett in her kitchen and shopping by John Cox an excellent spread was on offer. Judging by the unwillingness of people to go home, it does appear that a plate of food encourages conversation!! Ω



Welcome

MEMBERSHIP BADGES were presented at the April Branch meeting to Mrs Claire Watling, Mrs Frances Cotterill and Mr John Swannack. It was good to hear that Mrs Anne Bashore who was previously one of our three American members, had rejoined whilst on a brief visit to Joan & Tom Ashmore. Unfortunately they will not be asked to deliver her badge to Toledo!

A warm welcome was given to another visitor from overseas when David Grove introduced his friend Mr Roy Tonge, a member of Tenerife RBL Branch. Ω



Small Branch— Big Celebration

AS A BRANCH WE PRIDE ourselves on doing things rather well but judging by the 75th Anniversary Celebration arranged by the 30-something strong Cranford, Kent branch we have much to learn. Our Standard Bearers, George Fleming and John Cox, who attended were most impressed and we hope will write a piece about the event for next month's issue.



ATC at Ypres

JOHN STANDISH HAS sent this report of the Squadron's recent visit to Belgium.

"This year cadets placed crosses on 29 graves or memorials to men from the Harborough area and I laid the wreath at the Menin Gate on behalf of the Branch. The feedback from the cadets was good, among the comments were - 'an emotional roller coaster' - 'the visits to the cemeteries let you really understand the importance of what happened' - 'puts the war into perspective and helps you to realise what the people actually gave up for their country' - 'as always the Menin Gate and the cemeteries were very moving'

Obviously this is only a few youngsters from Harborough but hopefully it shows that Remembrance Day and all that goes with it is secure for the future.

Perhaps the Squadron can help with Poppy Appeal and I think it would be fitting if someone from the Branch came to the Squadron say in October and explained how the RBL works, etc. This will help tie up with Nov 11 and also the cadets trip to Ypres. I will provide a fuller report for the Branch if they want it.

The cadets have asked if, for next year, I can give more information on individuals and their graves. It could be very helpful to me if I could have a copy of the CD the Branch made last year as this will enable me to look at soldiers close to home. " Ω



More news on Page 6 Another Web Award

CONGRATULATIONS,

Mark Hudson on being author and Webmaster of "a best military website", an accolade awarded by the US based military.com. You won't be able to wear the medal, but the Branch website can display the "gong" for the rest of 2001. Ω



Links

A MR MICHAEL MILLS in

Peterborough sees a copy of In Touch and writes to the then Editor, Dick Fulford about his research into the fate of crew members of H M Submarine Strategem sunk off Malaya in 1944. Our research for the Books of Remembrance last year reveals that a Market Harborough man, L/Stkr Frankham was on that sub. and Mr Mills' letter is included on Frankham's page in Vol. 5. It is also published on our website and that of the Leicester Submariners. In Perth, Western Australia, a Mr John Eade is trying to get information about one of the few survivors of Strategem's crew, L/S Gibbs, finds the letter when "surfing the net" and by e-mail asks for Mr Mills' address. We await the result of linking these two researchers. Ω



April Pub Lunch

A NEW VENUE this time - the Coach & Horses at Kibworth where a room had been set aside for us in the expectation of our usual 16 to 20 people. In the event there were only 8, a great disappointment. So why this low turnout? Other engagements?

Location? No Clip-board circulated at the March Branch Meeting? Why? Why? Why? Those who did not attend missed an excellent meal, a pleasant pub and the chance to meet an unexpected visitor, author and In Touch contributor, Kenneth West. Ken, it was good to see you and adventurous of you to journey from the outer reaches of Leicester!

Ω



Hospital War Memorial

FOLLOWING THE SECOND team meeting, a Press Release was prepared to publicise the intention of the Branch to take a lead in efforts to ensure that the memorial is suitably preserved. Copies have also been sent to appropriate organisations and individuals.

NOT FOR SALE



THE NAMES INSCRIBED ON THESE PANELS ARE
A RECORD OF THE MEN FROM THE URBAN
DISTRICT WHO SERVED IN THE GREAT WAR.

ment by both Treasurer and Chairman that they will not stand for re-election at the AGM. Fortunately the long notice they have given offers a chance of avoiding the last minute "arm-twisting" that has characterised the run up to AGM's in the past.

So, if you can spare some time, energy and enthusiasm, want to see the Branch prosper, are not afraid to question convention or past practice, then the Branch needs you. Please have a word with Con Halsall (MH465314), Tom Ashmore (MH433108), Betty West (MH434923) or George Fleming (MH462711). Ω



Birthday Dinner

AS BRIEFLY REPORTED

in the last edition, the Dinner was held at

the Bull's Head, Clipston, on 16th March. 19 members and their guests enjoyed an excellent 3-course meal. For each dinner ordered (at a cost of only £10) the landlord of the Bull's Head donated £1 to the Poppy Appeal. His generosity did not end there either. After the sweet course, he presented our party with a birthday cake complete with the RBL badge, in icing, on the top. So you can see that it was quite a bargain for those who attended.

On behalf of all those who were present, we give our thanks to the landlord and his staff and to Mr Barry Thorpe (Social Committee member) for organising the evening. A raffle run by Mr John Cox raised £20 for Social Committee funds. Ω



YOU MAY RECALL that a few months ago we mentioned that a copy of the Legion magazine for May 1953 had come into the possession of our Welfare Officer Mr. John Liddell. His son had discovered it in an oven whilst renovating an old cottage. Herewith are a few excerpts from it.

FRONT PAGE

The lead article was under the heading "Legion Seeks New Meeting With Pensions Minister". This concerned the RBL National Executive Council deploring the fact that war pensioners interests had been totally ignored in the Budget Statement and a full page inside is devoted to the debate on this matter in Parliament. In conclusion, Mr Heathcote Amory (Pensions Minister) agreed that there was "room for difference of opinion" about the pension rates generally! (*A typical MP's non-answer to a question--some things never alter -- Ed.*)

Incidentally the cost of the magazine was 4d (old money) but was purchased by the branches for 3/6d a dozen, so each copy sold afforded a profit of ½d for the branch.

LOCAL INTEREST

News of local interest concerned the Birstall Branch. A headline from the Daily Mirror was reproduced stating that Birstall (Leics) Angling Club had won £150 prize money in that newspaper's angling competition. This angling club was in fact a sub-section of the Birstall British Legion, and the article went on to say how a small

From the Legion Magazine May 1953

lake in the village was rented for £100 by the 46 angling club members and that they had a special arrangement by which pensioners and other ex-servicemen who were unable to afford the necessarily high subscriptions could still enjoy the club's hospitality.

Closer to home was a paragraph which reads, "Great Glen Branch (Leics) has just celebrated its coming of age. At the 21st birthday meeting the branch marked the occasion by presenting Mr T Martin with a life membership certificate for his services. Since the formation of the branch he has been Chairman and Secretary."

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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|---------|--|--|
| WOMEN | 3 Feb. | Disastrous East Coast Floods—1000's homeless |
| | 5 Mar. | Stalin dies of a cerebral haemorrhage |
| | April | Watson & Crick publish the structure of DNA |
| | 29 May | Hillary & Tensing are the first to climb Everest |
| | 2 June | Coronation --Shortage of professional Coachmen |
| | 15 July | Christie hanged for murder of 4 women |
| | 19 Aug. | England win back Ashes after 20 years |
| 20 Oct. | Ford Popular launched @ £390 including tax | |

"Dear Sir, What can be done with a branch like this? It has 250 members. It has had no committee meeting since last October. No one attends the annual general meeting except the Legion committee which is re-elected every year en bloc on the proposition of one member who attends specifically for that purpose.

If there is a Legion rally, about 18 turn up; if a club outing plenty go. The only activity of the branch (apart from the benevolent committee) is Remembrance Day and Poppy Day -- plus a Christmas whist drive.

This branch is dead . . . killed by the club. -- Name and Address supplied."

Some members of our branch have bemoaned the fact that we do not have our own club, but the above letter may make them think again.--Ed

CORONATION

This edition of the magazine being May 1953, it was of course issued just ahead of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 2nd June.

An article in the paper informs us that as Her Majesty returns to Buckingham Palace after the Coronation Service, she will be greeted by 1,700 ex-servicemen, including 1,100 Legionaries, at Hyde Park, around the Wellington statue, where 89 standards, more than half of them Legion standards, will dip in salutation.

13 representatives of the British Legion will be present in the Abbey, and 1,010 (*I wonder who the odd 10 were?--Ed*) will be seated in the Hyde Park stands, and 440 war widows whose tickets have been allocated by the Legion's Women's Section, will also have seats in the Park.

ADVERTISEMENT

A film that was being advertised in 1953 was "The Desert Rats", featuring "a sensational new star" Richard Burton. The writer gives the film and Burton a good review, and ends with the words: " Given films of this standard, it will be long before the sands of the Western Desert grow cold, with the cinematic reminiscence of feet, wheels and tracks passing over them."!! Ω



Coffee Morning

9TH JUNE IS ALSO Carnival Day, so there should be lots of people in town. With your help on the day and your generous contributions of Tombola and Raffle prizes; cakes, pastries and preserves; bric-a-brac and books, we could achieve another record profit.

More details at the May Branch meeting and in In Touch. Ω



Poppy Race Day **NEWMARKET, 4TH AUGUST**

Pre-race attractions include

- The Household Cavalry display
- The Tigers free-fall Parachute display
- RAF Police Dogs display
- RBL Leiston Band
- A Steel band
- Parade of Standards (Including M H)

Cost including coach & entrance about £ 16
Reserve your places now (guests welcome)
Ring Betty West MH 434923



Concert & Picnic **BEAUMANOR HALL-7 JULY**

A RELAXING EVENING as you enjoy your picnic on the lawns to the accompaniment of light classical music. This annual event is very popular, so early booking is advisable.



Diary

Reminders for May with some other dates to keep free. (see also page 10)

9 May Branch Meeting—see below
30 May Branch Committee Meeting

9 Jun Coffee Morning—Harborough Theatre
12 Jun Pub Lunch—12.30 Red Lion, Welham
13 Jun Branch Meeting + George Gamble
7 Jul Concert/ picnic—Beaumanor Hall
11 Jul Branch Meeting
4 Aug Poppy Race Day—Newmarket
8 or 9 Sep Cosford & Blists Hill Museums
12 Oct Annual Dinner - M H Golf Club

Meetings

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

The next meeting is on 9th May and will be followed by a social session of uncertain duration of not too serious games.

The Branch Committee meets on the **Last Wednesday** of each month (except December).



The Royal British Legion

Reg. Charity 219279

Market Harborough Branch



Founded in 1923

In Touch

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Editor -- Bob England
83 Cromwell Crescent
Market Harborough, LE16 9JW.
Tel: 01858 464288

Branch Website - www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net