



Editorial

By the time you read this, the clocks will have been put back; a sure sign that winter is upon us. Still, as the majority of our members are of the OAP persuasion, we will all have received our 'flu jabs and look forward to £100 per person from our benevolent government towards the cost of keeping warm. What more could we ask? (I will print replies if you can think of anything!)

I am delighted that this issue includes two articles from our members. Thank you Sylvia and John and I can only hope that you can tell fellow members how painless this exercise was and they may gain encouragement from your examples. A small traditional piece is included to remind us that Hallowe'en is upon us once again.

The important reminder this month is, of course, concerning the next branch meeting as it is the Annual General Meeting. A good attendance is required so that you can take part in the organisation of the branch. Your vote can help to decide who holds the various offices and who sits on the committee; if you have any "grouses" (as if!) or any ideas or changes you would like to see implemented to improve the running of the branch, this meeting is the time and place to get it off your chest. If you don't tell the elected officers, they cannot know.

If you feel you would like to serve on the committee, get yourself nominated. (You can nominate yourself.) I know ex-military men everywhere are extremely cagey about volunteering for anything (through experience, perhaps), but I can assure you, like any good

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Social Committee Gifts

The Social Committee had agreed that the very successful year the branch had achieved should be marked by giving each branch member a small souvenir- a photo album. If you did not receive yours at the October branch meeting it should accompany this newsletter.

I'm sure you would wish me to record your thanks to Tom Ashmore and his team. Speaking as a past social secretary, I know just how much hard work goes into organising almost any event, so a successful year shows a lot of commitment of time and effort by those concerned. Thanks again, and may you keep up the good work.

The next event of a social nature is, of course, the Remembrance Band Concert on November 10th. Details are on p10. Please publicise the event which is in aid of the Poppy Appeal (Posters from Tom Ashmore, MH433108).

Yet another annual dinner and yet another resounding success. 78 members and guests attended this event at the Market Harborough Golf Club. Our Guests of Honour were Captain Ungaretti, the Defence and Naval Attaché to the Embassy of Ecuador, and his wife; the Chairman of the Market Harborough District Council, Mr Peter Callis and Mrs. Callis. We were also pleased to welcome RBL County Chairman, Mr Jim Rowlinson and Mrs. Rowlinson and representatives from Desborough and Husbands Bosworth Branches.

After an excellent meal members and guests danced to the music of *Terry Stewart Sound*. The success of the occasion could be measured by the number of people still there at midnight— another gold star for the Social Committee!

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Halloween Special

by Bob England

ELEGY TO A HIGHWAYMAN

The ghost, a doomed, unquiet spirit, wanders along the corridors of the old priory. Corridors that are now roofless and open to the skies and the cold starlight which tries to filter into the dark corners and shadows, that are only reached by the bleak winds that blow from the desolate moors.

An ephemeral figure is he, no more solid than the warm breath of a living man seen on a cold winter morning. Forever must this spirit wander, weighed down by the heavy, clanking chains around his shoulder, each link representing a sin committed in his mortal life. During his days on earth he had been a notorious highwayman, striking fear into hearts wherever he went, and he had taken the lives of some of his victims with no undue concern and certainly no remorse. Eventually caught, this cruel man had been hanged on the gibbet and his flesh left to rot as a warning to others. For him there had been no Christian burial, for him no eternal rest.

Now he was doomed to wander through the endless centuries, his restless soul forever seeking hallowed ground in which to rest, longing for cloying earth to embrace his bones, craving the perfect peace of death. But first he must atone for his sins. But what chance? No living man would enter this decayed, crumbling building, whose glassless windows had been likened to the empty eye sockets of a skull. And his presence had been felt, occasionally glimpsed, by certain discerning and sensitive folk.

Mortal man still feared the highwayman.



A Nostalgic Day Out

by Sylvia Saunders

On 8th September some 23 people boarded the bus to take us to the Blists Hill Museum at Iron Bridge and RAF Cosford.

Oh what a lovely day it was! We arrived at Blists Hill in fairly good time, the traffic not being as heavy as expected, and started to wander around the museums. It was wonderful to see the baker kneading the dough for the bread and rolls, and placing them in the oven so they would be ready for sale before people left. We saw the candle maker dipping the candles in the same way as they had done for many, many years -- or as our children would say, "in the olden days!" We found the bank where we were able to change our money for shillings and pence, so that we could pay for our purchases in "real money"!

We came across the pharmacy, the doctor's and dentist's premises, and all I can say is that I am glad I am living in the present age, where these things are nowhere near as scary as they appear to have been. There was Morris dancing to watch, the garden to enjoy, and a nostalgic visit to the fairground with its swing chairs roundabout, a coconut shy, darts and tombola stalls and many others. It was great to see all these things in action, although I could not persuade anyone to have a ride on the roundabout with me.

We left the museum and carried on to RAF Cosford where we were met by a gentleman who acted as our guide. He took us through the hangars, showed us the planes outside and kept our interest with his accounts of everything. It was wonderful to see these "old birds" and imagine

being in the sky and taking part in some of the assaults, or the pleasure flights in some of the big giants.

All too soon the day came to a close, but before going home we paid a visit to the Ex-Servicemen's Club, at Bedworth, where we enjoyed a pint or two, tea or coffee, or a soft drink; had a wander through the beautiful park there, and then continued on our homeward way, where we arrived somewhat tired but completely satisfied with a lovely day out.

Thank you, John, for arranging it.

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Poppy Appeal 2001

During the last branch meeting, Mr Alec Taylor presented a cheque to our treasurer for £12.50, being half the proceeds from a Jazz Concert, and asked that it be paid into the Poppy Appeal fund.

So the Poppy Appeal is off the ground, but Tom Jeacock would still appreciate volunteer helpers. If you can offer help in any manner, i.e. door-to-door collection in your area, or collecting with a box and tray in town, please get in touch with Tom (tel. 466829). Time is getting short now.

Incidentally, we once again have been given the use of the Charity Stall in the Market Hall. At the moment it is only definite for Saturday, 10th November, but there is a hope that we may also get it for the Tuesday and Friday of that week.

Looking ahead to next year, Andrew Marriott has agreed to take over as Branch Poppy Appeal Organiser. Thank you for volunteering, Andy, and we wish you well in your new capacity.

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October Branch Meeting

The very well attended meeting had quite a full agenda. The business side (items from which are printed elsewhere) was concluded and the

Chairman, Mrs Connie Halsall, introduced the new County Field Officer, Ms Moira Watson, who was a visitor for the evening. Ms Watson gave a potted history of her military career and explained her work as CFO for Leics.Rutland and Northants., dealing with both Welfare and Fundraising.

Ms Watson was followed by Squadron Leader John Standish who gave us a talk about the Air Training Corps. This really was an eye-opener for most of us as we rarely give a thought to the organisation behind these cadets. Also when John listed the activities that these youngsters (boys and girls, 13-18 years of age) are offered, ranging through visits, sports, adventure training, entry for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, flying, playing in the band, to name but a few, it is a wonder why all the youth of Market Harborough are not members.

Sq Ldr Standish finished with a slide show of the most recent visit of a party of Harborough cadets to the War Grave Cemeteries in France and Belgium, and where the band section gave various concerts.

But still it was not the end of the evening, as it was all rounded off with an excellent buffet.

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sergeant-major, that a spell on the committee entails no more than one meeting a month, lasting approximately two hours.

See you at the AGM.

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Welfare Notes

Mr John Liddell told members that he now seems to have reached an easier relationship and more co-operation in dealings he has with the Social Services on behalf of welfare cases.

He stressed that many welfare cases depended on members recognising and being aware of where help was needed and then passing such information to the welfare team. He also said that training for branch welfare workers was now available and a course would be taking place on 2nd/3rd March 2002. Such a course gives a better understanding of what is required at branch level. Anyone wishing to attend should contact John Liddell.

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Certificate for George

Treasurer George Fleming recently attended a Training Course for RBL "Independent Examiners" and is now qualified to "audit" the accounts of any branch of up to 100 members. Larger branches must employ an independent professional accountant.

But not for John

Treasurer-elect John Standish, wanted to go on the course for Branch Treasurers, but was told that only serving treasurers could attend!!! Do we assume from this that all newly-elected branch treasurers are expected (almost instructed) to muddle along until such time that a course is available for them? Talk about cart before the horse. One wonders who they employ at Pall Mall to think them up.

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Arnhem & Oosterbeek 2001

by John Cox

Every September since 1944, the Royal Army Service Corps Air Despatchers and ex-Air Despatchers go back to Oosterbeek, in Holland, where they hold a special church service following the main Arnhem service.

Oosterbeek Cemetery holds the graves of 32 Air Despatch personnel, and an appeal fund was launched in 1992 to set up a memorial for them. This proved successful and a memorial was erected and dedicated in September 1994, and sited on a hill close to the Cemetery. 250 Air Despatchers were in aircraft that were shot down and of the 80 killed, 17 have no known graves; others are scattered in 16 different locations.

I had attended the service on two previous occasions, in 1987 and again in 1995 with the Leicestershire Standard Bearers' Association, Royal British Legion. This year I went on September 20th for six days. On the Friday we visited four locations in and around Arnhem where Despatchers are buried. The next day, Saturday, proved a very full day as we were taken to two museums and a cemetery in Germany, followed by a wreath-laying ceremony in the Town Hall Square and a Band Concert at night.



The main Airborne Service in Oosterbeek was on Sunday at 11 o'clock, following a snack at the museum cafe. The separate service for the Air Despatchers was held later at 4 o'clock and followed by a barbeque.

Local children were present at the main service and each one carried home-made flags. After the service the children handed their flags over to the veterans. I must admit that this was a very emotional moment and I know I will always treasure the flags that I received.

Christopher Hibbert in his book "Arnhem", wrote: "The sight of Stirlings and Dakotas flying unhesitatingly into the German barrage where sometimes, although hit and on fire, they continued to circle above the German lines while the Royal Army Service Corps Despatchers threw out the supplies before their aircraft crashed, was so moving that for many of those that witnessed it, no more poignant memory of Arnhem remains."

As a result of their part in Operation Market Garden, the Air Despatch Units were awarded the right

to wear a formation sign of their own -- the yellow Dakota on a blue background. This insignia is depicted in a memorial window in Down Ampney Church, Wiltshire.

Notices

Will those members who are travelling to the De Montfort Hall Festival on November 3rd by mini-bus please note that it will **leave the Conservative Club at 6.15 pm**

REMEMBRANCE CONCERT Harborough Band

R. D. Jeacock and Sons, Coventry Rd, ABC Music, St Mary's Rd or Council Offices.

7.30 pm Saturday,
10th November at
Baptist Church,
Coventry Road.
Tickets £4 from

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The **Service** in St Dionysius Church, Market Harborough, will **commence at 10 am**. Those marching to the church should assemble on The Commons Car Park **by 9.30 am**.

Immediately after the service members are asked, in the words of our President, "to get smartly down to the Square" for the 11 am silence. Following this the party will move to the memorial in Welland Park.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Friday, December 7th, at 7.30pm. The Countryman, Great Bowden. £13.25 per head. Choose from the excellent menu at the November meeting or telephone Tom Ashmore (433108).

From the COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Special deals for RBL Members

LITTLE CHEF "2 for 1" offer on main courses. Details in Oct/Nov issue of **Legion** Magazine.

SEA FRANCE 10% discount on all promotional fares and published brochure fares. Call 08705 711 711, quote ref. no. 111921 & code TRBL. 5% of all bookings made will be donated to the Poppy Appeal.



Diary

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

- 3 Nov Remembrance 2001— de Montfort Hall
- 10 Nov **Our** Remembrance Band Concert
- 10 Nov Royal Albert Hall Festival of Rem'ce
- 11 Nov Remembrance Sunday
- 14 Nov **Branch AGM—Nominations by 12 Nov**
- 14/15 Nov Coldstream Guards Band - Loughboro'
- 7 Dec Xmas Dinner—The Countryman Inn
- 12 Dec Branch Meeting + Punch & mince pies.
- 15 Jan Pub lunch at Coach & Horses, Lubenham

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?

If not, please send your £8.50 ASAP to George Fleming, 11 Watson Avenue, M H, LE16 9NA
Cheques payable to Royal British Legion.

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 the AGM on 14 November & will be followed by a buffet.

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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