

## For Your Diary

19th Sep Battle of Britain Sunday  
10.15am Parade from old Swimming Baths  
10.45am Memorial Service in St. Dionysius  
Church, followed by March Past  
Please support our RAFA colleagues

29th Sep Branch Committee Meeting

1st Oct Subscriptions due for 1999/2000  
See p16 on how to pay

13th Oct Branch Meeting + collection of  
subscriptions (See p17)

15th Oct\* Annual Dinner at MH Golf Club  
(Have you returned the RSVP slip?)

23rd Oct\* Coffee Morning at Harborough  
Theatre in aid of Poppy Appeal

27th Oct Branch Committee meeting

30th Oct Festival of Remembrance -  
de Montfort Hall - 7 pm

30th Oct Poppy Appeal House to House  
collection starts

5 & 6 Nov Poppy Appeal Stall in Market  
Harborough Market Hall

Dates for street collections to be announced.

11th Nov Acts of Remembrance -  
10.15 am Welland Park Memorial  
10.50 am MH Square

11th Nov Branch AGM & buffet

14th Nov Remembrance Sunday Parade &  
Service - Details later

\* For more information please contact Bob  
England (MH 464288 between 4.30 pm & 8pm)

## Subscriptions

Amount due on 1st Oct. - £6.50

Payment (if not by Direct Debit) by Cash or  
Cheque payable to "Royal British Legion".

Payment to the Treasurer, Mr G M Fleming.

- by Post or Hand to 11 Watson Avenue,  
Market Harborough, LE16 9NA, or
- via the member who delivers your  
Newsletter, or a Committee Member (put  
payment in an envelope marked "From  
<your name>."), or
- at the October Branch meeting.

(You are advised not to send cash through  
the post)

The new Membership Cards are expected  
soon.

## Meetings

Regular 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.

Following the business  
part of the next meeting,  
on 13th October, the  
social session will be  
unstructured to allow you  
to enjoy a drink and a  
chat & George Fleming a  
chance to collect your  
subs. more easily.



Reg. Charity No. 219279

## The Royal British Legion Market Harborough

### Branch

Founded in 1923



# In Touch

Issue 21

September, 1999.

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## Editorial

Summer is slipping away almost without being noticed, and here we are, once again in September, three-quarters of the year gone, and just a few weeks to the New Millennium.

September is an important month for most members of The Royal British Legion. Firstly it marks the start of the second world war. Little could anyone imagine the horrors that were to unfold across the globe as we heard the Prime Minister say, "...and consequently this country is at war with Germany." Those who heard those words will remember them for ever.

And then, just one year later a new Prime Minister was to address the Nation to tell us of our debt to a few young men, and some not so young, who had repelled the armada of enemy bombers and gained the nation a respite from invasion. "Never in the long history of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few."

It was in a September that the Germans commenced their ill-fated assault on Stalingrad, and September was also the month of the Airborne landing at Arnhem. September seemed to be a fateful month throughout those dark years.

We have an opportunity to remember "The Few", at the Battle of Britain Memorial Service at St. Dionysius Church on 19th September, without whose victory nothing would have remained the same. I hope we turn up in force.



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## Another Town Crier

The Editor was impressed by his recent encounter with a Town Crier visiting Market Harborough, but how many of us know that for many years the town had a resident Crier and that he was one of our branch members?



The above picture, taken from a photograph lent by Tom Jeacock, will remind other Old Harboroughians of the time when Bernard Page was the Town Crier. Forty years on, Bernard is not the man he was and after 18 months of illness has had to relinquish the independence of his own home and accept the care and support of Beech House Residential Home. Still very alert, Bernard would welcome visitors and the chance of a chat.

## Puzzle Corner

Puzzles do not seem to be very popular - there was very little response to the first three. So, the following, may be the last puzzle to appear in these pages unless we hear that they are of interest to a number of you.

### Wartime B & B

Three soldiers asked the landlord for Bed & Breakfast and 10/- each was the agreed charge. During breakfast each soldier gave the waitress a ten shilling note, which she gave to the landlord. He said to her, "They are only soldiers" and gave her 5/- to return to them. She was not good at arithmetic so she gave them 1/- each and kept the remaining 2/-.

1/- from 10/- = 9/-.

Multiply by 3 = 27/-

Waitress has 2/-  
29/-

Who had the missing shilling?

The Editor awaits your answer!!

John Chamberlain, from Hallatou, was the first to phone with his answer to the July puzzle and will receive a prize when his copy of this issue is delivered.

The solution to the "Where am I?" brain teaser was to ask the man, "Do you live in this town?" (If you are in HERE, the truthful man would say, "Yes", and so would a liar from THERE. Similarly, if you are told "No", you must be in THERE).

Another link in the story of the Halifax which appeared in our last issue has been found. A young man, born and bred in Market Harborough, was a member of the crew of a Halifax bomber shot down whilst dropping supplies to the S.O.E. in France in 1944. The Halifax took off from Tarrant Rushton Airfield. He was Sgt. W.G. Lawrence, whose name appears on the Memorial Garden Gates and on the War Memorial in Little Bowden Church.

Two or three weeks ago, one Friday morning, the town was enlivened by the presence - and voice - of a Town Crier. Did you see or hear him? He was a magnificent figure, with an equally magnificent voice. A veritable Sergeant Major in Technicolor. Andy Latham, from Rugby was in town for the Friday and Saturday. He is Town Crier for Rugby, England, for Rugby, North Dakota, USA and for Daventry District Council.

### *A Reminder*

Leicestershire Constabulary have asked local groups to remind their members about the correct numbers to use when telephoning the Police.

Only call 999 if it is an emergency (e.g. to save life, prevent injury or an offence where the suspect is still at the scene).

Normally, call (0116) 222 2222 (remember it as treble two, double two, double two). Use this number if it is a non-emergency. (e.g. not requiring immediate police attendance)

## News

### Newmarket.

News that the Poppy Race Day is expected to have raised over £45,000 for the Poppy Appeal is given in the last County Circular which also said, ".....the county was well represented by the Market Harborough Standard Bearer and many branch members." It's nice to have had this acknowledgement.

### Branch Standard goes to France.

John Cox represented the Branch when he took part in the Leicestershire Standard Bearers' Association bi-annual visit to the Battlefields of Northern France during the August Bank Holiday weekend. The party stayed in Arras and visited some smaller cemeteries as well as the well known ones in the Somme Region, including a French one. One of the party who had served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment had a very sad and emotional experience when the party visited the church where in WW2, the SS massacred 98 members of his Regiment, some of whom he had known.

### September Lunch.

The venue for the most recent gastronomic(!) outing was the "Wheel & Compass" at Weston-by-Welland. There were 19 persons present (16 members & Guests), and was voted by some to be the best yet.

### Another Successful Buffet

was held after the September Branch meeting. Again, a simple but adequate spread of sandwiches, biscuits, cheese, crisps and confectionery was provided, a format which seems popular. The cost, which is met from the

## Subscriptions

The Annual Subscription for this Branch for the coming year remains at £6.50. Of this, £5.50 is the RBL membership fee and goes to HQ to provide funds for membership services and administration, including *Legion* magazine. Branches are free to charge whatever fee they wish in addition to the £5.50. Although the £1 which this Branch has charged for a number of years, covers only a small proportion of our membership costs, it has been, and remains, our policy to make up the difference from donations, fund-raising, and interest (on capital accumulated in the General Fund - not the Benevolent/Trust Fund).

It has been mentioned in *Legion* that the cost of running the Membership side of the RBL is a good deal more than the income from Subscriptions (which have not been increased to keep pace with inflation). However, this income could be increased by the "Tax-man" if more (tax paying) members were to "Covenant" their subs. Charities are exempt from paying tax on their income, but the sub. you pay comes from your income on which tax has been paid. It is that bit of tax that the Inland Revenue will pay to the Charity. Thus, it costs you nothing but it makes your subscription worth much more.

Please go to the trouble of asking Treasurer, George Fleming for a Covenant form and start increasing your contribution to the Legion without it costing you a penny!

Paying your sub. by Direct Debit is also to be encouraged. It saves you the trouble of remembering and of paying by post or in person. Again, ask George for a form.



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Continued from p 4

### Local Poppy Appeal Plans.

Those who attended the September branch meeting, heard Peter Wilson, our Poppy Appeal Organiser, outline this year's general arrangements and dates (see the Diary on p 16). More detailed plans will be given at the October branch meeting. House-to-house & Street Collectors are needed, as well as people to distribute the trays of Poppies and collecting boxes and to man the Charity Stall. Offers of help please to Peter on MH 464585.

### Car sharing.

In the August issue of *In Touch, Too*, car driving members were asked to offer lifts to those who need them and for those without cars to ask for lifts. The question was raised again at the recent Branch meeting in the context of the forthcoming Skittles Evening on Friday, 17th September. As a result, the whole contingent of 14 prospective players are assured of transport. So, don't be put off joining any of the social occasions because of the difficulty of getting there, someone may be able to give you a lift. Bob England will try to match need and help!

### RAFA Quiz Evening.

*The White Horse*, Nelson Street (formerly *McGowan's*, formerly *Admiral Nelson*), holds regular Quiz Nights to raise money for Charity. On Monday last, 13th September, the chosen charity was RAFA's Wings Appeal. Our Branch fielded three teams of four "Quizzees" and when the scores were read out at the end, our team names appeared to be near the top of the list. We then realised that they were announced in reverse order!! It is doubtful if any of us will appear on "Mastermind", but it was great fun and raised a useful sum for RAFA.

## Hurricanes Hardly Ever Happen!

By Ray Tyler

During the war I was a Jack Dusty (Storekeeper) in the *Andrew* (Navy). I normally slept in the afternoons and did my book-work about two in the morning. Early one morning, when I was preparing for the Bubbly (rum) issue, word came that the Galley (Kitchen) was not to be used. So no Ki (Cocoa) for those topside (on deck) or those doing the books.

Then the ship started to corkscrew (roll and pitch) badly, which we were told was caused by a Hurricane nearby. Suddenly, through the extra noise caused by the ship's movement there came a scream from the Galley. A cook, trying to make chips, was covered with boiling fat which had slopped from the large oil cooker.

I was alone and nearby, and action was urgently needed, but what? And very quickly! Outside the Galley were several large bags of white flour, used by the baker for making bread for the several hundred ship's crew. I ripped open one of these bags and rolled the lad in the flour. I yelled for someone to get a stretcher and one of our doctors. We had two.

Well, I was congratulated by the Doctor, who said that there would be very little scarring, but "how the hell do I get that flour off his body?" A few days later, still looking like a snowman, they flew him off to hospital ashore side and for all I know he is still there, covered with flour and oil.

Could I have done better? I often wondered. What would a good First-aider have done?

"Mess Fund" - the 50p's collected at meetings - will allow at least four such buffets a year.

**Picnic at the Proms.** You may have seen in the local papers a report about this event by the Harborough Band. Our member, Marion Vine, the Band's publicity officer, and her colleagues did a wonderful job in organising and presenting a most relaxed and enjoyable evening of music in the attractive setting of Neville Holt House. It is known that some branch members were there, but it would have been very pleasant to have had a group of us together. Marion, may I suggest you keep Bob England posted with plans of the Band's future concerts, spectacular or otherwise. He may be able to get a few more members in your audiences!

**Cheap Cinema Seats!** A few members took advantage of the scheme introduced at the Odeon Cinema, Kettering earlier this year called Senior Screen. After a summer break it has started again. Each Wednesday at 10.30 am OAP's can see a quality film for £1.50, which price includes coffee or tea and biscuit.

### New Members.

We welcome to the Branch, Mrs. O J Sadler who recently moved from the Birmingham area where she was a member of a Women's Section Branch, and Mr T Driver. A transfer to the Branch has been delayed because the application was received during the Legion "closed season" during which the membership list is frozen whilst the next year's Cards are being produced. Another enquiry has been received and an application form is awaited.

## ***Military Food & Drink***

by Tom Ashmore

I have a habit of picking up somewhat unusual reading matter and so acquire a mass of often useless but interesting information. A few months ago, on a second-hand bookstall, I found "Before Hansard - A quaint collection of curious Details from the Story of the Mother of Parliaments, gathered from the ancient Journals and from the Diaries of former M.P.s", by Horace Maybray King, M.P., published in 1968. I like the quote from "The Journals of the House of Commons", for 12th January for the Parliamentary year 1698-9.

### Navy Rations

Every man to have for his allowance by the day: one pound of good, clean, sweet, sound, well bolted with a horse-cloth, well baked and well conditioned, wheaten biscuit, one gallon of good, wholesome, warrantable beer, two pounds avoirdupois of beef, killed, and made up with salt, in England, of a well-fed ox, for two of the four days following, viz. Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays: and for the other two of those four days, one pound avoirdupois of bacon, or salted English pork, of a well-fed hog; and a pint of peas; and for Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, every man to have, besides the allowance of bread and beer, by the day, the eighth part of a full-sized North Sea cod, of 24 inches long... together with two ounces of butter, and four ounces of Suffolk cheese, or two-thirds that weight of Cheshire.

It is not known whether this was merely a proposal or whether late 17th century sailors ever saw such victuals!

## Army Rations

From the same Journals, but nearly a century later on 13 February, 1795, King quotes from the *Committee Report on Innkeepers billeting soldiers*.

Joseph Foddon, keeps the White Hart at Cranford Bridge: - That upon the 8th & 9th November, 1794, there were billeted upon him 50 men belonging to the Dorset Militia, and that they consumed 8½ pecks of Bread, 19 stone of Beef, and a Cheshire Cheese of 49 lbs, besides Vegetables and Small Beer, which cost him £6 12s 2d, and for which he only received from the government £1 13s 4d by which he sustained a loss in two days of £4 18s 10d by 50 men only, exclusive of Rooms, Firing, Bedding etc.

I wonder if Joseph Foddon ever received compensation!

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The next story is from a souvenir of Antigua, one of the islands visited on a memorable Caribbean cruise some years ago. It is in the form of a newspaper with the masthead "PUSSER'S" - Official Drinking Manual of the British Virgin Islands, Volume 1 Issue 1. It is an intriguing and elaborate advertisement for PRUSSER'S RUM and consists of a number of drinks based features, each used to introduce one of their cocktails. The following article is reproduced with acknowledgements to PUSSER'S WEST INDIES, and regrets that my wife and I had no opportunity to sample any of their concoctions in the short time we were on the island. However, we have used with success at home their recipe for Rum Punch!!

## The History of Grog

This is the original drink which comes down to us through the history of Pusser's Rum in the Royal Navy. For more than 300 years, Great Britain's Royal Navy issued Pusser's Rum to their sailors onboard their ships every day. Seamen drank the neat spirit in drams, one gulp with no heel taps, a practice inconsistent with shipboard work and sobriety and the cause of many accidents in the rigging when ships were at sea. In an attempt to solve this problem, an admiral by the name of Edward Vernon, (nicknamed "Old Grog" on account of the program cloak that he wore when the weather was up) consulted his captains and surgeons on board his ship, and on August 21st, 1740, he ordered that the men's issue of Pusser's Rum should be diluted with water in the ratio of 2 of water to 1 of rum, and that those with good conduct could receive lime juice and sugar "that it be made more palatable to them". Needless to say, the Jack Tars were greatly offended by the watered rum, and began referring to it contemptuously as "Grog" from the name they had already given Vernon.

Thus true grog was born in 1740 and comes down to us today. When you drink this one, you really are drinking what we call Liquid History. And it tastes damned good.

Into an old fashioned glass filled with ice: 1 tot (2½ ounces) PUSSER'S RUM, 1 teaspoon unrefined brown sugar, 2 tots good water or soda water. Squeeze a large wedge of lime and float the expended lime on the top. Stir and enjoy. \$3.50

(For the benefit of non-naval types, the "paper" explains that "pusser" is a corruption of "purser")