

In Touch, Too

Reg. Charity No. 219279



The Market Harborough Branch Bi-monthly News Sheet

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National Service with a Difference

One chap who was in the Military Police, spent the whole of his two years on the trains between Liverpool Street and Harwich. As we heard after the last branch meeting, John Liddell had a very different experience. After training as a surveyor in the Royal Engineers, he spent a year in the Middle East in charge of a small unit providing information for the preparation of maps of Jordan and



During part of this time he was attached to the legendary Arab Legion and met many fascinating people including some who had known Lawrence of Arabia. Thank you John, for a most interesting talk and giving us an insight into an unusual aspect of a little known activity of the RE's. I wonder whether your maps are still being

Another Légion d'Honneur

Although the Branch was not involved, a Member was present when the other Market Harborough WW1 veteran received his medal on the 8th February. The presentation to Charlie James was made by RBL County President, Lt Col Peter Roffey at a private ceremony at the Beeches Residential Home. County Field Officer, Peter Lockett was present in his capacity of the organiser of all these presentations in

Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Peterborough. Our John Cox was there as a long standing friend of the family, a connection which John explained at the February Branch meeting. After demob Charlie got a job on the railway at Ashley where he found lodgings with a local family and a friendship spanning four generations.

Wheelchair and Wellies

The idea of the branch owning a wheelchair which could be made quickly available to someone in need has been discussed at various times in the past, most recently towards the end of last year. The Committee agreed that a model which could be pushed or self-propelled by the occupant, should be purchased. It would be lent on a short-term basis, for example to allow someone who was awaiting their own wheelchair or for a particular occasion.

There is now such a wheelchair. It was purchased from the proceeds of

last year's Anniversary Band Concert, the Anniversary Dinner and donations. An account had been opened separate from Branch accounts to deal with those two Anniversary events and also the trip to the Edinburgh Tattoo and given the name "Friends of Market Harborough Royal British Legion". The account was also used to purchase the Wellington style tumblers, one of which was given to each branch member as a souvenir of the 75th Anniversary. The account has now been closed and the final balance of £101.60 paid to the branch general account. The wheelchair will

Branch Website

Mark Hudson has made further additions and improvements to our award-winning site. The pictures of Robert Cramp taken at the Museum last year are now followed by Hotsur's reflections on the Légion d'Honneur presentation which appeared in *In Touch*. Early Poppy Appeal results were given along with a good picture of Charles Freer on our Market stall and words of thanks to collectors, helpers and the Market traders. The Jack Quain Trophy award is described. New links have been made to the site of the WACO glider museum in Ohio and to a very interesting military history site.

Over 650 "hits" have now been recorded i.e. the site has been looked at on over 650 occasions. Mark has received a number of messages of

A Bone to Pick!

What was your reaction to the picture and report in the Mail of our award of the Jack Quain Trophy? I was cross at the wording of the heading ("*Old soldiers win top award*") and disappointed that the Branch is still being portrayed as a bunch of geriatrics left over from the War. Although I am not given to expressing my feelings in public, I did write a letter to the Editor trying to correct this popular misconception. I also pointed out that the award was presented to the Branch not to me as was stated in the report.

It had been arranged for the Press Photographer to take pictures of members with their Trophy, partly for our archives but also in the hope that publication in the Mail would give the Branch useful publicity. Although our Press Officer, John Sutton, provided a brief for the paper, the impression the Branch has been trying to dispel was still apparent in the report.

However, full credit to the Mail - the letter was published so some people

Treasurer Resigns

George Fleming has decided that having three demanding posts in the Branch as well as still having a full time job, really is too much. He is relinquishing the Treasurer and Membership Secretary jobs but will remain as Branch Standard Bearer. Since he was talked into being Treasurer over 5 years ago, he has been a meticulous custodian of our

financial affairs and his replacement (discussions in hand!) will inherit a well organised system and set of books. His "other hat" is being passed to Betty West who will combine membership matters with being Branch Secretary.

George, the Branch owes you much for two jobs well done.

Another Active Year?

Last year was special. With a 75th Anniversary to celebrate it was only natural that a great deal of effort was put in to make it a year to remember. However, we know what can be done and we know that when asked to help, most members will lend a hand. What is important is to decide what, as a branch we want to achieve and to have a programme of activities in which people will be involved. What would you like? How will you be able to help?

Three categories of activities are being considered.

Fund raising and Public Awareness

These include Coffee Mornings (3 dates have been booked), the Carnival (should we enter a float this year?), the Poppy Appeal (Market stall booked), a band concert (enquiries being made).

Social activities at meetings

The established pattern will continue. "Pencilled in" are three buffets (popular in the past), a talk by a Falklands veteran from St. Dunstons, an exhibition of medals from an extensive private collection, a Hobbies evening, a games evening, another quiz. Already booked for December is a film show by Harborough Movie Makers.

Social events for members between meetings.

Already fixed are the informal dinner, which Tony Johnson calls the "Boscosh Bash", on 3rd March (fully booked) and a visit to the Royal Marines Band concert at the de Montfort Hall which John Cox has arranged, with transport provided by Gordon Adnett (fully booked). A coach has been booked for a visit to Newmarket for the Poppy Race Day on 26th June. Full details will be available at the March meeting when reservations will be taken. Places may be available on the County Standard Bearers' trip to the Royal Tournament on 31st July. "Pencilled in" are Branch lunches (so successful last year) and a Branch Annual dinner (similar in style to the Anniversary Dinner?). Other possible visits which have been mentioned are to Duxford, other military museums, the Legion Village and the Poppy Factory.

A new "Social Committee" is being formed responsible for arranging activities for and by members. Its composition will be announced shortly, but in the meantime, if you are interested in the Poppy Race Day or Royal Tournament, or if you are willing to help with any of the activities mentioned,

DIARY

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| 3rd Mar. | Informal Dinner (fully booked) |
| 10th Mar. | Branch Meeting & Porton Down Video |
| 28th Mar. | RM Band Concert at de Montfort Hall |
| 31st Mar. | Committee Meeting |
| 14th Apr. | Branch Meeting & Buffet |
| 1st May. | Coffee Morning |
| 26th Jun. | Poppy Race Day at Newmarket |
| 31st Jul. | Royal Tournament (details awaited) |

Watch this space