



The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

BR0106



Poppy Appeal

Another Record

The total raised of £21,864.87 represents a 4% increase over the previous year's result and was again above the rate of inflation. On the basis of the 2001 census, the total equates to a nominal 84p per head of the population. Of the approximately £16,500 in the collecting boxes, 40% was from static points, 32% from street collection and 28% from house to house, proportions very similar to last year. Donations and special events raised about £3000, about 17% of the total.

Our Poppy Appeal Area covers about 45 square miles with many small villages and Market Harborough the only town. Of the £16,500 collections, over £3,100 came from the rural area, a credit to the many village volunteers.

Administration and Logistics

The Cabin acquired in 2004, again was of great value in storing and preparing the Poppy material for distribution to about 160 "static points" (shops, businesses, schools, etc.) and 50 "house to house" collectors ready for the start of the authorised collecting period two weeks before Remembrance Sunday. In addition, trays of poppies and up to 150 collecting boxes must be available a week later to service the street collectors who man six locations working in stints of at least one hour (some do far more) to cover the four market days from 9am to 4pm.

Distributing trays and boxes is undertaken by individuals, with designated "rounds", three for the rural areas, and in town, one for house to house collectors and six for static points. At the end of the collection period these members then bring in the used trays and, hopefully, filled boxes. Later they take "thank you" cards to their collectors and outlets.

To act as a base and control centre for the street collectors we use a stall in the Market Hall (kindly paid for by the market traders and the Council). Each day the required number of boxes is brought from the Cabin together with poppies and other items to refill the trays when the collectors return at the end of their stints. Their boxes are taken for safe-keeping and money counting.



Cadets help with the three town centre rounds. Uniforms and eye-catching trolleys attract attention.

The stall is also important as a display and information area attempting to explain the work of the Legion and the need for the Poppy Appeal with the theme *Remember the Dead - Help the Living*. It is also a useful source of contributions.

Ordering, distribution and obtaining "payment" for wreaths is another distinct responsibility and is undertaken by the member who also has one of the rural rounds.



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Communication and Publicity



George Seward

Internal

The Branch newsletter, *In Touch*, continued its regular monthly appearance throughout the year reaching the milestone 100th issue in January. By February, George Seward had been in the Editor's chair for four years and with the 11th anniversary issue in June had produced as many issues as his five predecessors had done between them!! As in other areas of Branch activity, it raises the question, what happens if he put down his quill pen?

External

As each new issue of In Touch is produced, an on-line version is added to the web-site www.in-touch.ukvet.net and until January, an email was sent to a number of other branches advising them of the update. In February, this was replaced by a newsletter style email which also provided links to items of interest in other branch web-sites. In May, the branch received an unofficial warning that the circulation of this publication contravened the Data Protection Act. Clearly it could not continue but the way in which it was stopped was seen by its author, a Vice President, as hurtful and insensitive and he voluntarily resigned his position. Having subsequently found that there was no contravention, the author, on his own responsibility as an ordinary member, and with support from previous recipients, has restarted the newsletter.

Publicity

Many Branch activities keep us in the public eye but some specific events call for direct publicity through press releases, posters, or leaflets. Display boards like these in the marquee at the Carnival publicise the Branch as such.



Information Technology

As reported last year, the Branch acquired a computer and printer to be used mainly for the Poppy Appeal as an aid to preparation, control and distribution, and for recording and analysis of income. In practice it was not used for the financial part of the computer system.

This is an example of the difficulty of finding members who have the requisite, though not demanding, level of skill who are willing to learn a particular system and to use a computer not in their own home. Clearly, it is far more convenient for those who use IT for Branch business to use their own home computer systems. The disadvantage is that these are not always compatible so making interchange of information more difficult and limiting the potential benefit of IT to the Branch.



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Founded in 1923

Social, Fundraising and Other Events

The Market Harborough Branch has had a busy year on the Social front. Our regular monthly lunches have been held either at The Angel Hotel in Market Harborough, an old coaching inn where they look after us very well, or one of the village pubs during the Summer. These are well attended and very much enjoyed.

We have held two fund raising Coffee Mornings in the foyer of the local theatre where we are ably assisted by the local Air Training Corps and the Army Cadets. We get many complimentary comments regarding these young people who are so polite and enthusiastic and offer another view of the youth of today.



The ever popular Cake Stall

The annual formal Anniversary Dinner Dance was held at the local Golf Club. The guest speaker was Sue Smith the Chief Executive of the Harborough District Council. In her previous post she had been involved in the setting up of the National Arboretum in Staffordshire and gave us a fascinating insight into how this was achieved.

The informal Autumn Dinner was also held at the Golf Club it was very well attended this year, with good food and great conversation.

The 'get togethers' with refreshments after four of the Branch Meetings give a welcome opportunity to sit and relax with other members of the Branch. On other occasions we have speakers at the end of the meetings – sometimes our own Branch members who have an interesting tale to tell.

We celebrated Veterans Day again this year by joining together with the Royal Naval Association and RAFA for an excellent lunch, which ended with community singing of some of the old wartime songs.

Remembrancetide is a very busy time for us all when a concert is given by our local prize winning brass band in aid of the Poppy Appeal, and a visit is arranged to the de Montfort Hall in Leicester to join in the Festival of Remembrance. Many of our members also join the organised visit to London to the Mountbatten Festival of Music, to hear the Royal Marines at the Albert Hall.



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Welfare

The Branch has three trained **Case Workers**, one of whom is designated Welfare Officer. All have attended the latest Case Worker refresher course.

Nine cases were dealt two of which are still outstanding. **Welfare Breaks** were arranged for four people who went to Alderson House in Bridlington. In the past, Byng House in Southport was the home allocated to cases from Market Harborough, but this is now unavailable to us whilst it is being extensively refurbished.

A number of **house and hospital visits** were made by various members but on an ad hoc basis when the need arose and often on their own initiative. The need for a more systematic method of notifying the need for, arranging and coordinating visits has been considered in the past but so far attempts to provide it have not been successful.

Remembrance

Remembrance Sunday took the same form as in previous years with a parade, led by the ATC Band, to the Parish Church where the Service, conducted by the Branch Chaplain, was attended by a very large congregation including Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Mr Richard Everard, and Edward Garnier, QC, MP. They took the salute when the parade returned to The Square for the wreath-laying ceremony and brief service held before the many members of the public gathered there.



Services and/or wreath-laying ceremonies were held in several villages including Lubenham and Foxton where our Standard Bearer, George Fleming was in attendance.

Remembrance Day observances followed the now established routine of wreath-laying at the small memorial in Welland Park followed by that at the Gates to the Memorial Gardens. The two minutes silence, signalled by firing maroons, was reverently observed there by a large gathering of ex-service people and members of the general public. Similar respect for, and understanding of, the Silence was shown in shops and other places.

County Festival of Remembrance. A party of branch members attended the well organised event at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, where they enjoyed the excellent musical entertainment provided by the Band of the Royal Marines.

Our Remembrance Concert was held again at the Baptist Church with the Harborough Band performing an enjoyable programme of popular music. Two cornet players and the Standard Bearer positioned high above the pulpit, created a fitting setting for the Last Post and Reveille.



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Ceremonial

The Branch has two excellent standard bearers, George Fleming and a deputy, John Cox. There can be occasions when both are needed but one may be unavailable, but attempts to find someone able to make the time commitment to be a second deputy, have not been successful.

Last year we reported that due to health problems, George Fleming reduced the number of times he was on duty but this year he has been able meet most of the demands for his service. For the Branch there were fifteen occasions including the Anniversary Dinner, the Carnival and the Remembrance events of Parade, Services, wreath-laying, Sunset ceremonies and Concert.

At County level George again took an active part in the Festival of Remembrance, was at the Poppy Football match in a new role as Parade Marshall and was at the ANZAC Day commemoration in Leicester.. Again away from home, he was at the Husband Bosworth Drumhead service, at a Stoke Albany memorial service and on the Standard Bearers' Association Battle Fields visit.

The Branch makes it known that the Standard would be carried at the funeral of any ex-service person if so requested. There were eight such requests during the year and this service was so much appreciated that several bereaved families made donations to Legion funds.

News of Members

It is good to be able to report notable achievements or events of individual members. Valerie Smith's and John Standish's Air Training Corps Awards and John's honour of the MBE, are covered on page 13.

In a different sphere, Helen West completed the Cardiff half-marathon and she, with sister Hilary Brazil, mother Betty Ramsay and 3 year old nephew, Christopher (in buggy!), did the 10 mile London Poppy Walk, and from each, raising valuable sponsorship money for the Poppy Appeal.

For his outstanding contribution to the County, especially as recruiting Officer, George Fleming received a Certificate of Appreciation at County Conference.

But it is with sadness that we record the death of seven members during the year, including Jim O'Brien, formerly Chairman of RNA, our oldest member, Reg Tarry and our longest serving member, President, Peter Wilson.

Brian Marshall was elected as Peter's successor.

For information about membership and meetings, see page 4.



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Working with Youth

A Message from the Youth Officer

The sincere congratulations of the Branch must be given to all three of our affiliated units

Market Harborough Army Cadet Force Detachment
1084 Squadron Air Training Corps
Market Harborough St John Ambulance Combined Cadet Division

Each of them has distinguished themselves throughout the year. Their successes clearly do not just happen but are the result of hard work on behalf of the cadets, their officers and instructors and this is recognised, not only by the Branch, but by the whole community.

The Branch is very grateful to them for the help they have given to all the events we have held during the year and in particular for the magnificent support to the Poppy Appeal.

It is a well known fact that the future of the Royal British Legion is in the hands of the youth of today.

Without doubt if this indeed is so then the Royal British Legion in Market Harborough has little to worry about. Again, our sincere thanks and congratulations plus our best wishes for further successes in the coming year.

Brian E Marshall

As in previous years several members have given talks to school children and the Branch is grateful for the opportunity of trying to reinforce what their teachers tell them. For even the youngest, it is important that they are introduced to the need for remembrance, the effects of war, and the need to provide support for those affected by conflict.



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Cadet Unit Report. . .ATC **1084 (Market Harborough) Squadron**

Current strength of the squadron is 45 cadets with an age range of 13 to 19. There are three commissioned officers and an adult sergeant ably supported by a small but enthusiastic team of civilian instructors. Two members of staff were recognised during the year, Flt Lt Valerie Smith, Commanding Officer, received a Defence Council Letter of Appreciation for her 'enthusiastic and dedicated work and the dynamic and energetic leadership qualities during her service with the ATC'. Flt Lt Standish received his second clasp to the Cadet Forces Medal recognising 24 years uniformed service and was awarded an MBE in the June Birthday Honours List



At the Menin Gate

The skill and enthusiasm of the cadets has also been recognised. The band won all three sections at the Wing Field Day band competition and the main band and percussion sections, at the Region Field Day and will compete in the National Finals in November. Some 15 cadets have qualified for the Young Life Safer first aid badge. Others are completing the radio training to qualify them to use the ATC radio network. In sport, cadets won Wing and Region Blues. And one cadet achieved a long held ambition when he completed a static line parachute jump.

The varied range of activities included Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Expeditions, adventure training camps where cadets tried the climbing and abseiling wall, a caving experience and archery. Annual Camp was at RAF Marham, learning about a modern RAF station and the chance to do go karting. In contrast, cadets visited the Houses of Parliament and met their MP.

The social side of the squadron was well to the fore with Valentines Day, Halloween and Christmas seeing party games and discos and the fun sports and barbeques at Bank Holidays.

Working with the Royal British Legion.

At county level, cadets were on duty at the Remembrance Festival at the De Montfort Hall and at Leicester City FC Poppy Match. Locally, cadets helped on the Poppy Appeal market stall and, with ACF cadets, delivered poppy trays and boxes to shops and businesses in the town. Again with the ACF, our cadets helped at the two RBL coffee mornings and, at those organised by RNA and RAFA, our cadets were again on duty.

It has become a tradition for the Band to lead the Remembrance Sunday parades at Market Harborough in the morning and then at Oakham in the afternoon. For the eleventh year, it led the parade of Lutterworth branch, and local police and fire men to the Menin Gate on its annual visit to the battlefields of Flanders. In July the Band lead a parade of standards at the Festival held to celebrate 80 years of Husband Bosworth branch .



At the Poppy Stall



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Cadet Unit Report. . .ACF

Who we are.

The Market Harborough Detachment is part of A-Company, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland County, which is one of the counties in the 49 (East) Brigade Army Cadet Force. A-Company is affiliated to the Royal Anglian Regiment which is why the cadets wear that regiment's cap badge.

The detachment commander is Sergeant Major Andrew Marriott who is also a member of Market Harborough Branch RBL. There are three other Instructors. There are now 33 cadets of whom two thirds are 14 years old or over and one third are girls, the highest since females were allowed to join in 1983/4.

All undergo training and are encouraged to increase in proficiency by working up a scale of award stars. During the year cadets achieved other qualifications in life-saving, in sport, in which some represented the County and in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The detachment has had three bronze and six silver passes. Annual Camp is an important event which sixteen cadets attended this year, an increase on last year, but it is hoped that nearly all will take part in future.

What we do.

An important aspect of their training is in citizenship and community service. Working with the RBL Branch is a valuable element of this and is something the cadets enjoy (and for which there is no shortage of volunteers!). They helped at both coffee mornings, on kitchen duty or helping on the stalls. In late October two were involved in the launch of the Poppy Appeal and helped to deliver Poppies and collecting boxes to shops in the town centre.



On the Bric-brac Stall

On each occasion our cadets worked alongside their ATC counterparts. This is an example of demonstrating the basic objective of both organisations - helping to develop good citizens. Members of the public, seeing cadets with the Poppy Trolleys, or doing real jobs at the coffee morning, will have formed a favourable impression of these young people and helped dispel the generalised negative perception of teenagers they may have had

What our bosses think.

Extracts from Detachment Inspection Report dated 8 June 2006.

Visiting Officer's Report -Turnout and Bearing - *Excellent.*; Training - *Standard very good...Cadets enjoyed themselves whilst learning*; Additional Remarks - *Good work with RBL. Very Good Detachment*

Commandant's Remarks - *SSI Marriott and his team are achieving great things here. Well Done.*

Brigade Commander's Remarks - *This is a very good report reflecting hard work and dedication.*

This Annual Report is published with the authority of the Branch Committee of Market Harborough Branch Royal British Legion. The content of the sections is based on information provided by members having responsibility in the relevant activities but the actual text, selection of images, layout, production and printing is by the Editor, Tom Ashmore, (tashmore@ukvet.net) who apologises for, and requests notification of, any errors .