



# **The Royal British Legion**

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION



## **Market Harborough Branch**

Reg Charity 219279

# ***In Touch***

*Issue 153*

*June 2011*

The monthly newsletter (founded 1996) of the Market Harborough Branch (BR0106) of the Royal British Legion.

**‘Shoulder to Shoulder  
With All Who Serve’**

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting  
Wednesday  
13 July**

Function Room, Conservative Club, Fairfield Rd, Market Harborough  
7-30pm

## Branch News

By the time you read this the carnival will be over as will the Mad Hatters Tea party organised by the Air Cadets to celebrate the Legion's 90th anniversary.

A big thank you to the volunteers who helped at the carnival and those who took tea with the cadets. Particular thanks to George Fleming who designed and built the carnival float.

It never ceases to amaze how the branch depends on the same few volunteers. However even a willing horse can be pushed too far. The branch needs more involvement from all members not just 'the few'. The editor of In Touch announced he is stepping down to concentrate on his role of chairman, John Morley is stepping down as Chair of the Armed Forces Committee.



**ANGEL**  
the  
HOTEL & RESTAURANT

37 High St, Market Harborough  
LE16 7AF. Tel 01858 462702

\* A family owned hotel with 28 en-suite rooms.

\*Function room for private parties

\*Family restaurant serving evening meals and traditional Sunday lunch

\* afternoon teas (Apr to Sept)

\* Lounge bar - a great place to enjoy a drink with friends

**Waiting to Welcome You**

George Fleming will no longer be able to organise the Remembrance Garden.

It is a simple fact that unless volunteers step forward to undertake these roles then this news letter will cease, there will be no Armed Forces Day and the Remembrance Garden will not be put up this year. Over to you!

### Where Are You?

This branch has over 160 members, the average attendance at branch meetings is about 40. So the question I ask is why don't the others attend branch meetings?

I know some will have good reasons eg travel, ill health but what about the rest - why don't you come?

What can we do that would encourage you to come?

Perhaps more 'social' type events, guest speakers, quizzes, a different night. Whatever it is please tell us and we can try to include your ideas into future meetings.

Drop the editor a line, or e-mail. If you wish to remain anonymous then that is fine, your feedback will be passed on to the Committee for their consideration.

## Welfare

If you are aware of any one who qualifies for, and who may benefit from, the Royal British Legion welfare services please contact

**Betty Ramsey**  
01858 434923

## Advertising Signs

On a taxidermist window -  
We really know our stuff

On a plumbers van -  
We repair what your husbands  
fixed

On an opticians door -  
If you don't see what you are  
looking for you have come to  
the right place

## National Arboretum Visit

Our friends in the RNA are organising a trip to the National Arboretum on Tuesday 19 July. The coach will leave the Market Hall bus station on Northampton Rd at 9am. The coach should arrive in time for the daily Act of Homage in the Chapel and thereafter you can tour the Arboretum at your leisure. The coach will depart at 3pm arriving back in market Harborough about 4-15pm.

There is a cafe available serving hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks or you can take your own and eat at the tables provided. Admission is free and the coach will cost £7 per person.

To reserve your seat send a cheque payable to the Market Harborough Royal Naval Association to Pat Middleton, 7 Howard Way, Market Harborough, LE16 9LD.

## No Comment



## New Medical Dictionary

Enema - not a friend

## Puzzle Corner

Can you find 5 pieces of furniture in the grid. All letters must be used but each only once.

Start at a letter and move one place in any direction to find the next.

```
LEARD
BCHIR
ACUBA
TBPOO
EDSFA
```

## HMS Stevenstone

Survivors, families and friends of HMS Stevenstone gathered at St Andrew's Church Foxton on 8 May to commemorate the 67th anniversary of the heroic actions of the crew off the coast of Holland on 30



November 1944.

HMS Stevenstone was a Type III, Hunt class escort destroyer. She was ordered in August 1940 and launched on 23 November 1942, being named after a Devonshire fox hunt. She was adopted by the town of Barnstaple and entered RN Service on 18 March 1943 joining the flotilla in May the same year. She had a top speed of 27 knots and a compliment of 168 men. Armed with 6 x 4inch AA guns, 2 x 20mm AA guns, 1 x 2 pdr gun and 2 x 21 inch torpedo tubes she took up convoy and patrol duties in the English Channel.

She continued these duties until June 1944 when she escorted

Convoy J9 to JUNO Beach Head for the invasion of France.

On arrival at the beach head she provided preliminary bombardment and gunfire support during the assault.

She was transferred to Harwich for

North Sea convoy duties following increased enemy E-Boat activities and on 31 October she sank a German E-Boat off Nieupoort. Her luck ran out however on 30 November 1944 when she struck a mine during a patrol off Ostend.

She sustained

major damage to the forward structure causing flooding and the ship took on a list. Fuel and coolant leakages caused fires and 32 shipmates were casualties including 14 who were killed.

The ship managed to reach the Thames Estuary under her own power but stern first accompanied by a salvage vessel and a tug. Inspection showed extensive buckling of the keel and a hole 12 ft by 11 ft. Repairs were completed by the end of June 1945 and in August she deployed to the Mediterranean working up to operational deployment. After the war she was involved with a collision with another ship and in 1947 reduced to reserve status

.and she was broken up in 1959. The HMS Stevenstone Association has been coming to Foxton for 23 years. Foxton was chosen because Jim Cook who lived in Foxton was a signaller on board and Foxton was relatively central in the UK. The service has been attended for many years by the Branch, RAFA and RNA Standards



### **Armed Forces Day July 3rd**

All is now ready for our celebration of Armed Forces Day. I appeal for a full turn-out of members for the opening ceremony which will be presided over by Lady Greeton HM Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire. Please be on parade in blazers or smart attire with medals at 10.15hrs ready to greet our honoured guest and take part in a Royal Salute. During the day, arena displays will include our own Army and Air Cadet Forces, Military Dogs, County RBL Standard Bearers, Carnival Drums and others. Static displays are being provided by RBL, RNA RAFA, St Dunstan's, Poppy Calls, and BLESMA. There will be vintage military vehicles, memorabilia and other items of interest. Harborough FM will be on hand to provide commentary and support.

The Chair of HDC, Cllr David Beatty will be with us for the closing ceremony and your presence is requested at 2-15 for the ceremony. Don't miss this opportunity to show your support for Britain's Armed Forces, past, present and future. John Morley - Chairman Armed Forces Committee

### **The MOD reported the following soldiers killed in Afghanistan.**

**Rifleman Martin Lamb** 1st Battalion The Rifles was killed on Sunday 5 June. Aged 27 from Gloucester

**Lance Corporal Martin Gill**, 42 Commando Royal Marines, was killed on Sunday 5 June 2011. Aged 22 from Nottingham,

**Corporal Michael Pike** 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, was killed on Friday 3 June 2011. Aged 26 from Huntly,

**Lieutenant Oliver Augustin** aged 23 from Kent and **Marine Samuel Alexander MC** aged 28 from London, 42 Commando Royal Marines, were killed on Friday 27 May 2011.

**Colour Serjeant Kevin Fortuna** 1st Battalion The Rifles was killed on Monday, 23 May 2011. Aged 36 from Cheltenham

**Marine Nigel Mead** 42 Commando Royal Marines, killed on Sunday, 15 May 2011. Aged 19 from Carmarthen,

## Thoughts From Annual Conference

**M**y first visit to an annual conference and what a mixed reaction. The first event was a Membership Council Fringe meeting on the Friday afternoon. The branch committee had asked for 3 questions to be raised at the meeting and I was asked to speak to one of them. The session started with a presentation by the new Head of Membership Bob Gamble. Bob's presentation was a breath of fresh air, his enthusiasm unbounded he left everyone feeling the Legion was definitely moving forward.

However what followed was a step back. There were 90+ questions tabled, written replies were given to all of them but only 12 were spoken to and there was no time to debate answers or expand on points. All in all an exercise that didn't work, but 10 out of 10 for the thought.

**S**aturday started with the opening ceremony and prayers followed by the National Chairman's address in which he said 'membership was not optional but essential' and the Director Generals address and annual report. He divulged that subject to the necessary approvals Poppy Scotland would merge with our Poppy Appeal and that talks were in progress with RBL Scotland to discuss how the two organisations can work more closely together. After the first round of Charter Motions the guest speaker Stephen Jackson explained how Battle Back Centres would work.

After lunch (not provided) the motions continued including the one on affiliation fees.

This followed the presentation on the accounts and a very graphic illustration of the dilemma facing the Trustees with the continued shortfall on fees.

There were 8 amendments to the original motion and the debate descended into chaos as few members seemed to understand what was happening and fewer still seemed to grasp the gravity of the situation.

Conference narrowly avoided finishing up voting to do nothing but did vote for £1 increase for the next six years. However I expect this will be on next years agenda!

A special reception was held in the evening when Betty and I took the opportunity to speak to the youth membership officer.

**O**n Sunday all the awards were presented, and some of them seemed a bit irrelevant when they had been won by the same branch for many years or the % increase in membership was less than .2%. Lunch was preceded by a stirring and emotive address by Patricia Varga, Dominion President, Royal Canadian Legion who rightly drew a standing ovation at the end of her address.

After a long lunch session we reconvened for the Service and Presentation of the National Standards. Much to my surprise I knew the Youth Standard Bearer from my ATC connections.

A rousing rendition of Land of Hope and Glory and the National Anthem

and it was over.

**M**y abiding thoughts, how could we vote for £1 a year increase! Are there going to be members in future - yes if the Officers have their way perhaps not if the members hold sway.

Should the Branch be represented next year - yes because it is important that this branch has chance to influence policy and perhaps we should consider sending 2 delegates. Would I go - depends if I am still Chairman!

Voting details can be found at [britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk) under membership then information for members

## **RBL Polo and Sweat Shirts**

**T**he Branch has arranged a special deal through local company Actifwear for RBL polo shirts and sweat shirts.

Both items are in royal blue with the Legion Poppy motif on the left chest and the strap line 'Shoulder to shoulder with all who serve' on the right chest.

These items are ideal to wear on any informal occasion when you wish to show your support for the Royal British Legion.

Prices are £12-36 for polo shirts and £13-68 for the sweatshirts. For an extra £1-20 you can add the branch name, Sizes - Small (34") to XXL (50"). (XXXL available at extra cost)

Send cheque payable to John Standish with items required and size to John Standish 5 Manor Rd, Fleckney, LE8 8TN.



**Tuesday 5 July**

**Reservation before 28 June  
to Les Moore  
01858 463112**

Cancellations on the day to **Les**  
**before 9-30 am.**

If Les is not available phone the Angel 01858 462702 before 10am or the meal will be charged for.

### **Menu**

*Warm cheese & tomato quiche,  
mixed salad, coleslaw, new  
potatoes*

*Pork chop, roast potatoes, carrot  
& swede mash, apple sauce,  
gravy.*

*Smoked Hake on a bed of  
Colcannon, parsley sauce*

*Rhubarb & custard gateaux,  
clotted cream, & ice cream*

*Fresh fruit salad with fruity sorbet*

*Lemon meringue pie & cream  
coffee & mints*

**Only £8-25**

**Meet in the bar at noon**

## What's Going On?

- 20 June** Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Ceremony, Old Grammar School 1020 for 1030
- 29 June** Desborough Armed Forces Lunch £11-50
- 3 July** Armed Forces event - Welland Park see page 5
- 9 July** RBL Concert at St James the Greater, Tickets £5 to £13. Names to Les Moore
- 20 July** RNA visit to National Arboretum Memorial.
- 6 Aug** Poppy Race Day Coach £15-50, admission £9-50 or £12. A popular & fun day at the races. Contact Betty Ramsay.

## Puzzle Corner—Answer

The items are

Chair, table,  
sofa, cupboard,  
and bed

## Branch Contacts

### Secretary

Betty Ramsay  
01858 434923

### Treasurer & Membership

#### Secretary

Myra Grewcock  
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LE16 8JE  
01858 419517

### Poppy Appeal

Dave Pryor  
01858 540431

### Wreaths

John Liddell  
01858 465003

### Standard Bearer

Hilary Brazil  
c/o 01858 434923

### Monthly Lunches

Les Moore  
01858 463112

### Editor - *In Touch*

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Next Committee Meeting 7 July

## And Finally

Hangover cures include -  
Outer Mongolia - a pickled sheep's  
eye in tomato juice.  
Middle Ages - a plate of bitter  
almonds and dried eels.

*The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the Market Harborough Branch.*

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*The newsletter is online at [www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough).*