



The Royal British Legion



Market Harborough Branch

Reg Charity 219279

In Touch

Issue 155

August 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
14 September**

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

COUNTY HALF-YEARLY CONFERENCE

Tom Ashmore reports on the July Conference held in Melton Mowbray.

The Half-Yearly Conference is a less-formal meeting than the Annual Conference in January and usually takes the form of a questions and answers session with a guest speaker. This year was no exception and 48 Members present (representing 18 County Branches) along with County staff, listened to Bob Gamble the newly appointed Head of Membership from HQ outlining how he sees his task ahead and The Way Forward in general. Mr Gamble stressed that Membership was the bedrock and the key enabler in everything the RBL did. Surprisingly there are 40,000 to

45,000 new members each year but a loss of 50,000. It is a people organisation with Welfare at the heart and is earning in excess of £100 million a year. Comradeship was a word that had come back into the Organisation's Royal Charter and Mr Gamble saw this as Loyalty, Trust and Mutual Respect from the top down.

He looked at some key issues whilst assessing 'where we are'.

Communication – the Achilles' heel of the RBL. For example there were three databases at Haig House which could lead to a triplication of paperwork going out to one Member! The magazine was still losing money – To attract a wider readership advertisements would need to appeal to a larger and broader sector. The RBL is failing to communicate that it spends £1.5 million per week caring for beneficiaries throughout their lives. This is in contrast to Help for Heroes who raise funds for specific groups for a limited time. 9.5 million people are eligible for RBL Welfare.

Mr Gamble said there had been recent publicity about the Covenant – but do we know what this is?



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

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

Contact with the Services had been allowed to peter out over time but within the RBL the importance of Service engagement is being emphasised by the lead taken by National President, Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely.

Asked whether the £1 per year rise rather than the recommended £16 Annual Subscription would be sufficient for him to carry out his original plans, Mr Gamble said no, but unnecessary costs would be cut and there should be some recognition to Membership of all its welfare referrals.

The Membership Council will have a bigger role.

Welfare strategy will encourage welfare to be done locally and funded from the £15 million in Branch accounts.

The important thing is how the RBL is perceived. Mr Gamble gave the example of Lucozade which had always been associated with sickness until it was re-wrapped and re-launched as a sports drink! The RBL must create a more appealing image of itself and there should be greater and better use of Information Technology to reflect the present very high level of computer use by the people we need to influence. Richard Foster, County Manager, took the opportunity of stressing the large amount of work done within the County on Welfare (some £10,000 per month with 30%+ being almonised), which Members agreed had more relevance for local supporters than annual, national figures.

Letter Received

Dear Mr Standish

My name is David G Longcake; I am currently researching my family tree and happened upon the article on HMS Stevenstone in June 2011 edition of In Touch.

I believe that my grandfather, if I am reading his "Certificate of Service in the Royal Navy" correctly, J86457 Leading Seaman Joseph Champness Longcake served on her between 9 March 1943 and 29 June 1945.

I was hoping that you might be able to put me in touch with any of his shipmates to help confirm this.

I am particularly interested in what action led to him being awarded the Distinguished Service Medal on 28 November 1944.

Regards, David G Longcake MBE.

If you can help please contact the Editor who will pass on any information to Mr Longcake.

Puzzle Corner

In a darts competition at the local pub each dart could score either

40, 39, 24, 23 17 or 16

The challenge was to score exactly 100 with the lowest number of darts. (Not restricted to 3 darts per turn)

Harry won but how many darts did he throw?

National Arboretum Visit

Several Branch members took part in the RNA trip to the National Arboretum.

As a first timer I didn't know what to expect but it was a place I have wanted to visit for some time now.

First impressions were the size and sheer number of memorials, not all of them military or service orientated.

There were lots of individual memorial plaques affixed to trees, many with poignant verses and a day could be spent wandering round these wooded areas alone.

However some of the inner areas of the woods did not 'encourage' one to walk through them and the number of dead trees were noticeable.

No criticism of the Arboretum staff, it must be a tremendously difficult job keeping on top of the maintenance of the woods and memorials.

The Far East Prisoner of War memorials and exhibition brought back

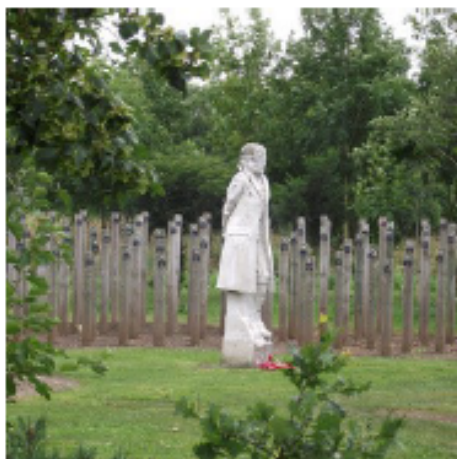


memories of the books I used to read as a boy and reminded me how appallingly badly the prisoners were treated by their captors. The picture shows a section of track recovered from the Kwai

Railway.

Having a special interest in WW1 I was particularly keen to see the Shot at Dawn memorial.

Always an emotive subject and one likely to engender strong feelings I thought it was tastefully and sympathetically done.



Visits to the memorials with special interest for me included the Halton Apprentices as my step father was one of the 'Brats' and the Fire Service memorial as he also served as a fireman.

The Royal Military Police memorial took me back to my younger days when I was in the TA serving with the RMP.

Naturally the various RAF memorials were of interest to me

The one thing that struck most forcibly was the National Memorial, not the names inscribed, not the statues as impressive as they are but the vast empty space where more names are being added.

A sobering thought that losses will continue to be incurred by our armed forces and it reminded me

that the work of the Royal British Legion is, and will be for many generations, so important Coupled to this how each of us should still do 'our bit' to the best of our endeavours.



“Not Many People Know That”

Ale was once ordered in pints and quarts so when customers got unruly the bartender would yell "Mind your pints and quarts" as warning to people to look after their drinks.

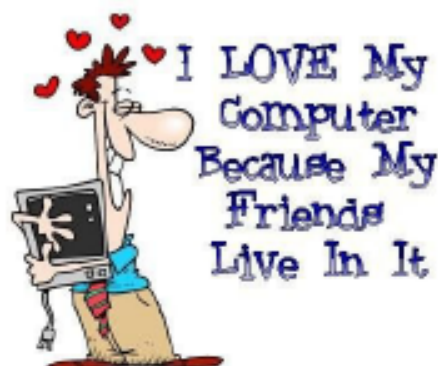
This got shortened to "mind your P's and Q's"

Around the same era locals often had their own pint pot behind the bar. Many had a whistle built into the handle of the pot and when they needed a refill they blew into the handle to attract attention. This led to the phrase 'wet your whistle'

Noel Coward said "I am not a heavy drinker. I can sometimes go for hours without touching a drop"

Your round!

Modern Friendship



New Medical Dictionary

Fibula - a small lie

Impotent - distinguished, well known

Labour pain - getting hurt while at work

Medical staff - a doctors cane

Morbid - a higher offer

The MOD reported the following soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

L Cpl Paul Watkins 9th/12th Royal Lancers was killed on Saturday 16 July, aged from 24 from Port Elizabeth South Africa.

Cpl Mark Palin 1st Battalion, The Rifles was killed on Monday 18 July, aged 32 from Plymouth

Forgotten Heroes

We know that world war one killed some ten million fighting men almost 8000,000 of them British, but what about the forgotten heroes the horses that had no choice of going to the front.

Between the Somme in July 1916 and the Armistice in November 1918 the British Army recorded 58,090 horses killed and 77,410 wounded by gun fire. 211 were killed and 2,220 wounded by poisoned gas, while several hundreds were killed by aeroplane bombs. Thousands were left lame by nails and blades on the battle field.

The British army shipped nearly six million tonnes of fodder across the channel during the war, slightly more than the weight of ammunition dispatched, when the corn ran out the animals suffered from emaciation.

As the carnage on the battlefields grew stables in Britain could no longer supply the army's needs so horses were shipped in from Canada and the USA.

Parrington, a Devon man gave advice on the care of horses as most wartime soldiers did not know how to tend them. They overloaded their mounts, neglected saddle sores, lamed beasts by carelessness, caused them colic by feeding them wrongly and all this before they got to work by moving cavalry, artillery and supply columns into the path of shot and shell.

Man has been exploiting animals for centuries. Many paintings depict warriors charging into battle with

swords held high, wild eyed mounts stretching their necks out as they surge forward towards the enemy, yet few pictures show the consequences, ie battle fields on which abandoned, maimed animals wander in agony and bewilderment, lacking a kindly bullet to free them from their misery.

Today injured horses are treated and often see their days out at the Remount near Melton Mowbray. If you drive by you can often see them grazing peacefully in the fields.

One story I like is of John's grandfather who farmed at Stoughton during the war and had his horses taken by the army. One such horse was away for 4years and when he was bought back he walked straight into his own stable as though he had never left. So it just shows horses remember things and have feelings as well.

By Pat Walker.

Editors note, Of course it wasn't only horses that suffered in the war. An interesting book recently published is 'Tommy's Ark'. This describes the use of animals and the effect of war on wildlife as seen through the soldiers eyes.

London Poppy Walk

Didn't I say last year enough was enough, but there we were again knocking on the doors of Haig House at some unearthly hour on a Sunday morning, waiting to collect our map, instructions, T-shirt (that always swamps me) and a bag of malteesers (if I'm lucky). Cockfosters and the London Underground were no more attractive than they

were last time we did this, at around 8am. Anyway, we left Haig House at 9.45am and joined others madly searching for clues. These seem to be in some odd places and I don't think my Sherlock Holmes magnifying glass would have helped (even if I hadn't left it at home!) Lunch-time was a long time coming but fortunately we missed a very heavy



shower while we were indoors. There are only so many times I could be told not

to run up steps to the Home Office; vanish in crowds queuing for the London Eye or join in the Veterans' Parade on The Strand so eventually I managed to extract a promise to visit a toy shop at the end of the Walk and that sped things up considerably!

We arrived back at HQ about 2-45 - quite a respectable time - and then had to have our paper marked (much like when I stand in front of my teacher at school - hoping they are all ticks). 'Prizes for all who finish before 4pm' they had said, well Gran just managed to get a 90th Anniversary mug - I don't expect to see it again. However, I did get my toy and slept all the way home.

Now, where is the sponsorship money and a volunteer to look after me next year? Enough is enough!

Christopher Brazil On behalf of The Ramsay Ramblers.



Tuesday 6 September
Reservation before 30 Aug
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.

If you don't cancel as above you
will be charged for the meal.

Menu

Filet of hake on a bed of mashed potato & parsley sauce, duo of vegetables

Roast pork, roast potatoes & gravy, duo of vegetables

Cheddar cheese salad, with warm new potatoes

Iced lemon meringue gateau with mandarins

Summer fruit jelly with clotted cream

Fresh fruit salad with clotted cream
coffee & mints

Only £8-25

Meet in the bar at noon

What's Going On?

- 15 Sep Branch Meeting
- 4 Oct Branch Lunch
- 5 Nov Leicester Festival of Remembrance
- 5 & 6 Nov Football and Rugby
Poppy matches

Important Notice

In the last two months three people have ordered the monthly lunch but not attended on the day. There is no record of them cancelling the lunch as asked on Page 7.

This means the branch social fund has to cover the cost of these meals.

If this happens again then we will have to consider alternative arrangements for the monthly lunches. Your co-operation will be appreciated.

Puzzle Corner—Answer

Harry threw six darts.

4 scored 17 each ie 68

2 scored 16 each ie 32

Branch Contacts

Secretary

Betty Ramsay
01858 434923

Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Myra Grewcock
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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 Sept 1

And Finally

Over 35 billion e-mails are sent each day

Over half the worlds population have never used a telephone..

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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