



The Editor Writes

I'm not sure if it has something to do with growing old, but time seems to pass ever more quickly. Believe it or not, Poppy Appeal preparations are already under way in Market Harborough, and as you will see in this issue, the 2004/05 campaign will be co-ordinated from our brand new headquarters. (As a loyal Member and avid reader of *In Touch*, I can reveal the secret codename for the HQ - Portakabin!)

Largely undertaken by the indefatigable Tom Ashmore, arrangements for the siting, purchase, delivery and fitting out of the Portakabin have been completed. Tom, who also constructed the bench and shelves, has been ably assisted throughout by George Fleming and Bob England.

After years of trying to conduct an efficient appeal campaign from makeshift premises, with stock stored in Members' garages, lofts and garden sheds, working in the new Portakabin will be a real boon to the Appeal Committee. As Bob England reminds us on page 8, the logistics involved are amazingly complex and, consequently, the new HQ will enable operations to be co-ordinated efficiently. It goes without saying that forward planning is essential and Bob and his team are well ahead of schedule.

Let us show our appreciation for the sterling work of the Appeal Committee by making absolutely certain that we will be doing everything we possibly can to make the campaign a success. Don't forget that you can call upon the help of friends, who don't need to be Legion members, to ensure that every household in your locality is visited with a Poppy tray. Bob is waiting for your call as he endeavours to colour in every road on his map to indicate that it will be covered by a collector.

Why not make your commitment now? As Del Boy would say, "You know it makes sense!"

The Poppy Appeal 2004/05

Organiser Bob England
Reporting from the new Appeal H.Q.

There are now only two more branch meetings before we start collecting for the Poppy Appeal 2004/05, and - **WE STILL NEED VOLUNTEERS!**

We require people who are willing:

- to carry out door-to-door collections from October 30th
- take the Poppies and collecting tins onto the streets on Friday and Saturday, November 5th and 6th, and Tuesday, the 9th.

More immediate tasks are:

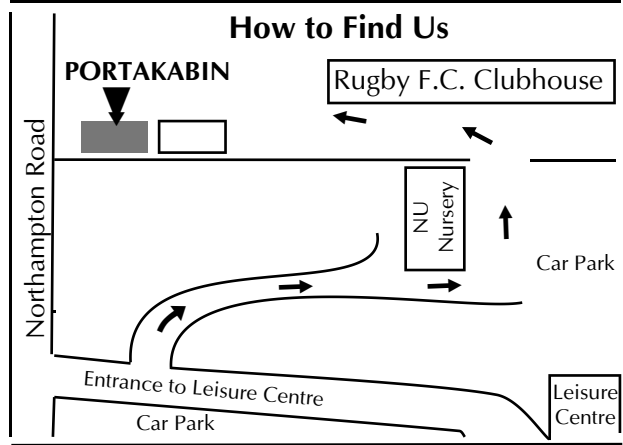
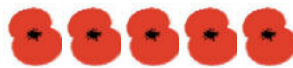
- the preparing of the trays for collectors
- contacting the shops, pubs, hotels, etc., in the town willing to take trays and collecting boxes into their premises.

With 23 villages, over 100 shops and businesses, and the door-to-door and street collectors to be serviced with trays and boxes, we require in excess of 240 trays to be prepared. Happily, these tasks can now be carried out in the pleasant environment of the new Portakabin.

So, if you are able to help the Appeals Committee, please let me know and we will arrange a convenient time - morning, afternoon or evening - to meet at the Portakabin, the sketch map shows the location.

You can contact me on Market Harborough 464288.

For Members attending branch meetings there will be boards for you to add your name if you are able to give us some of your time.





Poppywalk 2004. Market Harborough Branch will be well represented at this annual fund-raising event. Betty will once again lead her daughters, Helen and Hilary, notoriously known as the Ramsey Ramblers, on the walk in central London on 26 September and, of course, your support for their efforts will be greatly appreciated. Kindly make your pledge as soon as possible to Betty on MH 434923 (evenings and weekends, please).

Branch Annual Dinner. Joan and Mary will be collecting £12 per head and noting your choice from the menu at the next meeting. However, if you are unable to attend and would like to book your place at this popular occasion on 2 October, please contact Joan McMillin as soon as possible on MH 462143.

Onward and Upward. The Branch membership has risen to 131.

Gala Evening at the Harborough Theatre. Proceeds from the Evening on 6 November will go to the Poppy Appeal. A particularly apt choice for the occasion, there will be a performance of R C Sherriff's poignant play, Journey's End.

Gary on the Move. Gary Farnsworth has obviously made good progress since his recent spell in hospital. He proposes to undertake a sponsored wheelchair event, which, naturally, members will be asked to support. Further details will follow.

Call Up for Cadets. The County Executive have asked Market Harborough to provide two cadets, from the local Army Detachment and ATC Squadron, to look after guests at the Festival of Remembrance.

Take In Touch on Holiday! Do you remember the Harborough Mail photo contest with holidaymakers photographed holding up a copy of the paper? Let's do the same with *In Touch*. Send the Editor a photograph of you or your nearest and dearest holding up your favourite Legion newsletter with a suitable background in some exotic location like Miami Beach or Skegness.



The Diary

Details of all Social Events are available from Joan McMillin on MH 462143. Joan welcomes your ideas for events, outings, etc.

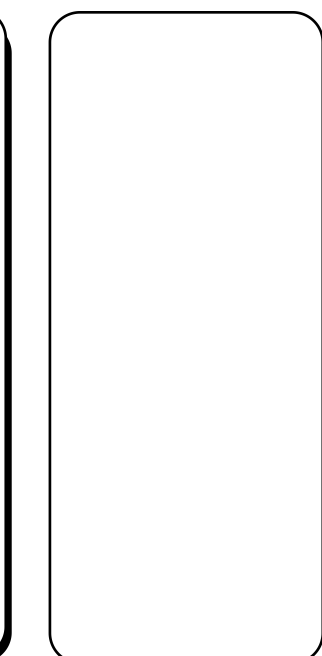
SOME DATES TO KEEP FREE

- 19 Sept Battle of Britain Memorial Service in Mkt Harborough
- 2 Oct Branch Annual Dinner - MH Golf Club
- 6 Nov Festival of Remembrance Concert - De Montfort Hall
- 6 Nov Branch Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre
- 8 Nov Poppy Appeal Gala Evening - Harborough Theatre
- 13 Nov MH Band Remembrance Concert - Methodist Church

The date of the next meeting is September 8th

Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the downstairs Function Room, Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The Branch Committee meets on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.30 pm in the upstairs Committee Room at the Conservative Club.





The Royal British Legion

Reg. Charity 219279

Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Branch Website
www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net



In Touch

Issue 71

August 2004

Editor
George Seward : 01858 433873
18 Charles Street,
Market Harborough, LE16 9AB
e-mail : g.seward@btinternet.com

In Touch on-line
www.in-touch.ukvet.net

Branch Contact Numbers
Welfare
Vida Edwards : 0116 279 3729

Hon. Secretary
Betty Ramsay : 01858 434923

One Man's War **Stanley Snow's Story**

After being called up into the Army, I did three months training at The Race Course, Warwick. After that I was nearly always stationed on the coast - South, East and West - also the far North of Scotland.



Sergeant Stanley Snow.

On February 6th 1943 I married Joyce, both living in Medbourne. She had joined the Women's Land Army, but was living at home, having a job on a village farm. I was by then training for the D-Day landing around the coasts.

Our daughter Jill was born May 2nd 1944 and I had 24 hours leave. I was only able to catch a glimpse of my new daughter in the nursery at the Market

Cottage Hospital - no holding her or touching her, very strict and mothers only seeing their baby at feeding times. I did not see Joyce and Jill again until the end of the war in Europe.

When the time came we were transported down to Petworth Park, Sussex, knowing it would be our last place in England before D-Day. We were there for a few days until we awoke to find that we were all fenced in. It was June 4th and we knew then it was our time to embark. Because

of bad weather we were on the boat until the night of June 5th, not knowing until we were briefed on board where we would land. We set sail for Sword beach and when we were about three miles from the French coast, we were transferred into landing craft. It was a very choppy ride and most men were seasick.

Then the British bombardment started with shellfire, aircraft and small arms fire. The Germans retaliated and all hell was let loose. Our air force put down a smoke screen for us and, as we approached the beach, ramps went down and we jumped into water up to our chests. We were all carrying almost our own weight in explosives and ammunition and many of our group were lost in deep water before reaching the beach. We scrambled ashore as best we could, soaking wet and stayed in the same clothes for the next six weeks.

On we went, taking the targets set out for us - a pill box containing around twenty Germans at Ouistreham, then taking the Casino there; on we went to Pegasus Bridge, then to Randville, a big battle there and we dug in and held the line until Caen fell. We were then transferred from the Ox & Bucks into the 51st Highland Division, owing to the losses of men. On we then went to the Falaise Gap, then back to Ouistreham, and across the Seine into Belgium. We were rushed down to the Ardennes, where we held back the Germans. We spent Christmas there in 21 degrees of frost and no overcoats and a foot of snow. On Christmas Day we had a piece of cold pork and a bottle of cold beer, the pork from a pig which we caught and killed a day or two before.

On to Arnhem and the Rhine and I was then fortunate in getting seven days leave. When I returned to the front line, the Rhine had been crossed, but I had lost almost all the mates I had been with most of the way from the beach-head. After very tough battles and being wounded, I still carried on.

We fought our way to Bremervorde, where I was badly wounded on May 2nd, my daughter's first birthday. After an operation in the field hospital, I was put onto a plane

and flown home. However, the plane developed engine trouble and came down in Belgium. I was taken to a hospital in Brussels, where I was again operated on, almost losing my left leg.

The war finished on May 8th, thank goodness. I was in hospital until fit to return home. I had remained on duty despite being wounded twice during the fighting, my deafness being the result, and on each occasion, Joyce had letters from the War Office.

Finally, on arrival in Market Harborough, there were no buses, taxis or trains, so I had to walk the seven miles home to Medbourne.



Stan pictured at the Sword Beach Memorial during his visit to Normandy on the 60th Anniversary of D-Day.

The Right Way to Bring 'em Up!

Whilst on holiday in Devon, Reg Tarry was attracted by the sound of a drum band and received a pleasant surprise. The musical beat, he discovered, was produced by the Youth Band of the Ilfracombe Branch of the Royal British Legion.

"It was wonderful to see young people involved with the Legion," said Reg, "I am sure it will be valuable to them in later life."

This is a reminder that, if there is an RBL Club in a town you are visiting, you will always be welcome to drop in for a drink and to meet new friends. Don't forget to take your membership card.

All Aboard the RBL Jolly Boat

Although much of his naval career was served under, rather than on, the water, a dangerous mission was fearlessly undertaken by our ex-submariner chairman when he skippered the good ship Day Boat on the Grand Union Canal.



Hazardous waters on the Grand Union.

Braving extreme weather conditions (it wasn't half raining) and assisted by his First Mate, Acting Lieutenant Bob England, Cap'n Mark Hudson skillfully steered the ship through the entire length of the Market Harborough Arm, successfully negotiating such severe hazards as the Foxton



Swing Bridge. Acting Lieutenant England, whose service uniform was of a different hue, soon became familiar with the naval commands barked out at frequent intervals by his Captain. His response to "Left hand down a bit!" was a sight to behold.

On watch with Captain Hudson and Acting Lieutenant England.

On board Day Boat was a select crew of Royal British Legion stalwarts who spent the entire outward-bound voyage covering below deck, sustained only by coffee and scones served from the galley by Acting Temporary Wrens Joan McMillin and Mary Symon, who, incidentally, must take joint responsibility for the whole foolhardy venture.

After two hours at the helm, Cap'n Hudson dropped anchor near the Shoulder of Mutton, that well-known pull-up for bargees, where lunch was enjoyed. Later when the ship's

company staggered back to the Day Boat, the rain had stopped and the sun warmed the cockles of our sea-faring hearts all the way back to Market Harborough.



Needless to say, Cap'n Hudson was in his element as Skipper, but he did admit to being rather disappointed that he was not asked to use his powers and perform an on-board marriage ceremony!



Top: Wendy Osborne and Joan McMillin.

Above left: Mary Symon, Pam England and Vida Edwards.

Right: Norman and Joy Banting at the sharp end.

Below: Most of the ship's crew at action stations.



A Day at the Races



Coming up smartly on the rails, George Fleming, County and Branch Standard Bearer, is fourth in line in a parade of some three dozen standards at the Poppy RaceDay at Doncaster Racecourse.

County Review

Items of Interest from the Leicestershire & Rutland RBL County Circular

A County Field Officer, Richard Foster, has been appointed and will take up his duties on 20 September.

The prestigious Certificate of Appreciation, only one of which per County is awarded annually, has been presented to Mrs Jean Atton of Wigston Branch in recognition of her dedicated work for the RBL and, in particular, as County Poppy Co-ordinator since 1990.