



The Editor Writes

We end the year on an optimistic note with excellent news from our Poppy Appeal Organiser, Bob England. Whilst the final figure will not be available for some time, Bob is confident that, with over £18,000 already in, the total will beat his target.

This is a great achievement and we should congratulate Bob and his team of helpers who have striven so hard over the past weeks. The festive season is almost with us - so, ladies and gents, please take a well-earned rest!

Mark Hudson has asked me to pass on his thanks to all who have contributed to a successful year and to wish Members of the Branch a happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful 2005.

My Christmas Grand Prix Reminiscences of an aged Road Runner

On a recent, rare visit to London, I was renewing my acquaintance with well-remembered areas from the top deck of buses. After travelling along Whitehall my bus was held up for nearly ten minutes by the traffic lights at Trafalgar Square. My mind went back forty years; well, it's easier than trying to remember what I did yesterday!

Back in the early Sixties I worked from The Scotsman newspaper office in Fleet Street. The paper was sold every day in the London area by street vendors, station bookstalls, shops and hotels. Supplies were brought from Edinburgh to Kings Cross by overnight train, arriving about 6.30am, and a team of drivers collected copies for their daily delivery runs. When I first started on the job, my run took me to London Airport (as it was then known) dropping off supplies en route.



All for a Mars Bar

By Jim Livermore

She was a big girl, was Doris,
Quite plain, but full of laughter.
Some how, don't ask me how,
During the Friday dance ritual
When we stood on a floorboard line
Then moved across for our partner.
She always picked me - or pounced,
Would be a more like expression.
She often cheated, every time in fact.
It had been known, a little bullying.
I was a skinny, gangling, six footer,
She was about five feet six, but big.
Normally, always dressed in white.
One Friday dance night, as usual,
We paired up, awaiting the dance.
An announcement was made.
There would be a knockout competition,
The Viennese Waltz, who was for it.
Every pair, some had to be coerced,
Consented to this epic event.
The music, records of course, started.
We moved off, some quite smartly,
Doris and I watched and waited our turn.
Once into it, around and around.
All other thoughts forgotten for now.
Into the swing of it, quite smoothly,
Being as graceful as we could ,



Never try to outsmart a woman



A man worked and saved all of his life and was a real miser when it came to his money. Just before he died, he said to his wife, "When I go, I want you to take all my money and put it in the coffin with me. I want to take my money to the afterlife with me". He got his wife to promise him that when he died, she would do as he asked.

He eventually died and was lying in the coffin, with his wife sitting there in black, and her friend sitting next to her. When they finished the ceremony, just before the undertakers got ready to close the coffin, the wife said, "Wait just a minute!"



"If it wasn't for the grown-ups, I don't think I'd bother."

Spotted in The Spectator

The dance floor was very crowded.
Music then stopped, dancers removed.
On again, another Waltz, another stop.
More and more dancers left the floor,
Until, Doris and I were the only dancers,
We didn't realise until the music ceased,
There was a lot of clapping and cheers.
Doris and I had won the first of many.
The prize we shared was a Mars bar.
Worth then, two pence, (a modern penny)
But they were on the ration!

No change there, then

Grandad: "All I got in my day was an apple and an orange."

Young Wayne: "Did you really. I got a computer and a mobile phone, too!"

She came over with a box and put it in the coffin. Then the undertakers locked the lid down, and they rolled it away. So her friend said, "I know you weren't fool enough to put all that money in there with your husband."

The loyal wife replied, "Listen, I'm a Christian, I can't go back on my word. I promised him that I was going to put the money in the coffin." "You mean to tell me you put that money in with him!!!!?" "I certainly did" said the wife. "I gathered it all together, put it into my account and wrote him a cheque. If he can cash it, he can spend it!"



Branch Posts 2005. George Fleming and John Cox are willing to continue as Standard Bearer and Deputy, respectively. Vida Edwards will continue as Welfare Secretary and as a Caseworker supported by John Liddell. They will be joined by Betty Ramsay, who has completed the caseworking course.

Memorial Gardens. Following discussion it was agreed that the Council be notified of the untidy state of the Gardens and the failure to lock the gates overnight.

Distraction Burglary. The importance of continued vigilance in view of this ongoing menace was emphasised by John Liddell.

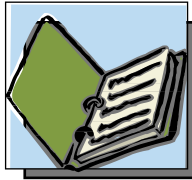
Poppy Appeal Football Match. The collection made at the Walkers Stadium amounted to about £2990, which will be shared between 15 participating branches.

War Memorial. The monument in The Square is showing signs of wear and the Chairman suggested that enquiries should be made for the cost of renewing lettering. Ken Stimpson pointed out that this was the responsibility of the Council.

A Warm Farewell. Mulled wine, kindly donated by Bill Farnsworth of Lubenham, was served with mincepies and nibbles by Joan and Tom Ashmore to bring the December meeting to a very sociable close.

It is with much sadness that we record the passing of Renie Fulford. A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed by the Branch to Renie who, along with her husband Dick, was responsible for an essential part of the local Poppy Appeal operation. For many years, Renie and Dick's home was a hive of activity while they counted, bagged, recorded and banked all the cash, mostly grubby coins, donated to the Appeal. Always ready with a smile, Renie will be sorely missed at meetings and other Branch functions. Our condolences go to Dick, their daughter Marion and all the family. *(A proposal that £100 be donated to the Poppy Appeal in lieu of flowers was carried unanimously.)*

Regrettably we report a further loss with the death of Ted Salisbury on December 4 after a lengthy illness.



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

- 12 Feb RNA outing to Festival of Music.
- 18 Mar Branch Anniversary Dinner at MH Golf Club.
- 2 Apr Branch Coffee Morning
- 9 Jul Music for a Summer Evening, Beaumanor.
(Please note this is a corrected date)
- 5 Nov Branch Coffee Morning

The date of the next meeting is January 12th

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

Market Harborough Branch

Reg. Charity 219279

www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net

In Touch

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Granddad's Christmas

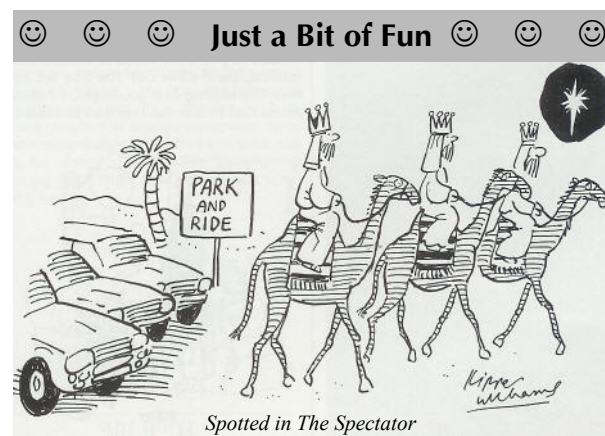
By Joan Ashmore

On the night before Christmas in the Stead household the men stayed up. No beds for them! The women and children slept. Around 5.30am, Father Christmas filled the pillowcases and the children opened one eye and closed it again quickly.

About an hour later (his one moment of domestic duty during the year, Granddad reappeared with tea and biscuits (usually custard creams) for the women. When all the sleepers were up, the men went to bed.

The morning passed, children playing, women cooking, men sleeping. Then came the Christmas dinner, children first sitting, adults second. This would be about three o'clock. Then party games followed by the piece de resistance of the evening. All squeezed into the front room and singing and playing would begin: one piano, two banjos, wooden spoons and comb and paper. Around 9 pm Granddad would rise and sing "My Old Dutch" to Grandma, accompanied by rousing cheers from all the family.

How Christmas continued after that, I was too sleepy to know, but as far as the kids were concerned Granddad's Christmas has been great again.

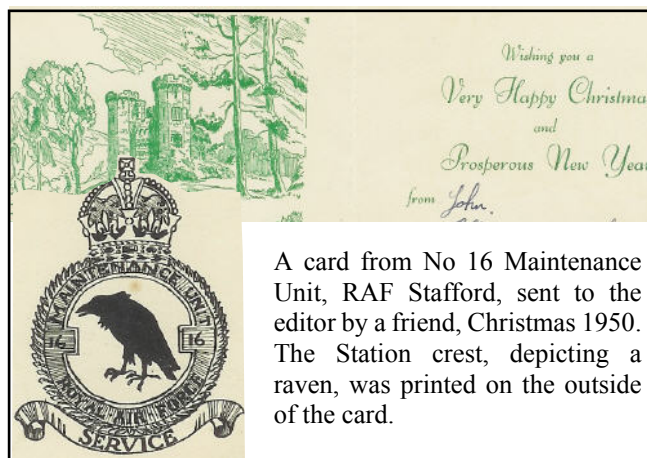


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Looking very austere and far from festive, the card on the right was the standard issue for Tommy to send home his greetings during the Great War.

It would seem that pains had been taken to ensure that no unpatriotic comments or secret coded message could be written on the card.

In 1944, the United States 82nd Airborne Division tried to introduce a bit of festivity with the homemade effort shown below. It was loaned by Betty Jeacock.



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(Addressed to the editor's grandmother.)

The all-purpose, do-it-yourself message card did not go a bundle on optimism. Apart from the health report, the section to do with non-receipt of letters is quite heart-rending and, hopefully, would have elicited a response.

As the printing on the reverse is indistinct, it is reprinted.

Nothing is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

(Postage must be prepaid on any letter or postcard addressed to the sender of this card.)

I am quite well.
 I have been admitted into hospital
 { sick } and am going on well.
 { wounded } and hope to be discharged soon.
 I am being sent down to the base.
 I have received your } letter dated.....
 } telegram.....
 } parcel.....
 Letter follows at first opportunity.
 I have received no letter from you
 { lately
 } for a long time
 Signature only
 Date

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It's been a pretty good year!



The young and not-so-young at the affiliation with the Market Harborough Army Cadet Force.

Both local cadet units were affiliated to the Branch. They were the first in the County to be linked to the Legion in this way.



The renowned band of 1084 Squadron, Air Training Corps, leads the Remembrance Day Parade.



Distinguished guests and Branch Officers on parade at the successful Annual Dinner.



George Fleming was elected County Standard Bearer. He is fourth in a line-up of some three dozen standards on the Poppy Race Day at Doncaster Racecourse.



Tom Ashmore at the Poppy Appeal HQ, to which he has given so much time and effort.



Left: Spreading the word from the Branch stand at the Market Harborough Carnival.



Centre: The future of the War Memorial Portico was the subject of talks between Branch officers and NHS authorities.



Right: Long serving Poppy Appeal Collectors received certificates of appreciation.

At Christmastime, the English newspapers were not published, unlike those in Scotland. This is not to suggest that the Scots were any less enlightened or spiritual than their neighbours south of the border - and they did make up for lost time with an extra bank holiday at New Year.

So, our jolly team of deliverers gathered at Kings Cross on Christmas morning as on any other weekday through the year. This would have been a somewhat wasted effort, of course, if, as in these days, railway services had packed up on Christmas Eve. In those far off times the overnight express would steam in after its four hundred mile journey and on board were hot-from-the-press supplies of The Scotsman dated 25 December. Increased quantities were printed and extra sales outlets arranged to satisfy the insatiable appetite of the English and, of course ex-patriot Scots, for the latest news.

So, back to my thoughts on that recent visit. The capital is now a twenty-four-hour city with many shops staying open all night and bus services running almost as frequently as in daytime. It is difficult, if not impossible, therefore, to visualise the centre of London completely devoid of traffic, but I am able to recall just such a situation.

At around seven o'clock on a 1960s Christmas morning, I drove up Whitehall and around Trafalgar Square in my trusty Hillman Husky at forty-odd miles an hour, with not another vehicle in sight!



How the other half lives!

Prince Edward and Sophie were having a night in, and Edward had made a pot of tea.

"Where's the tea strainer, darling?" he asked. "You know very well," said Sophie, "it's his night off".