

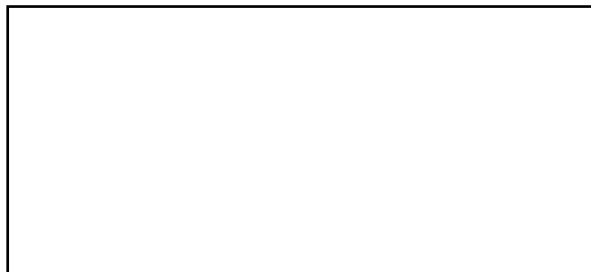


In Touch, Too



Founded in 1923

Reg.. Charity No 219279



The Market Harborough Branch Bimonthly News Sheet

Issue 16

February, 2000

County Conference

The Branch was very well represented at Melton Mowbray on 22nd January. In addition to your elected delegate, Tom Ashmore, George Fleming was there as Deputy County Standard Bearer and Betty West and John Cox as observers. All agreed that it was an afternoon well spent although there were some dire warnings about the serious state of the Legion General (i.e. Membership) Fund.

In previous years delegates to National Conference have not allowed affiliation fees to be increased (even in step with inflation) so now reserves are at a dangerously low level, despite drastic pruning of services and costs. A resolution from Quorn Branch to increase the annual fee by £2 was approved and will go forward to the National Conference in May. It was pointed out that RBL membership would still be very cheap at 14½ p a week, little more than half the price of a first class stamp.



The Guest speaker was Ms Denysa Edmonds from the Nottingham Office of the War Pensions Agency. She gave a clear and informative talk on the work of the agency and the War Pensions system.

For your representatives the most pleasing part of the proceedings was the presentation of County Awards. You already know that George Fleming had won two cups in the Annual Standard Bearers' Competition and these were formally presented to him.

The Millennium Project

Plans for the Festivals week allocated to the Branch (6 -12th November) are progressing well and under the leadership of Tom Jeacock, more members are becoming involved and interest is being generated outside the Branch. At the March branch meeting George Fleming will have a drawing showing the layout of the Garden of Remembrance. He has already built two "memorial" features and the considerable task of making some 400 wooden crosses is being undertaken by Stan Snow and Jason Ingman (Stan & Richard Snow's carpenter). Full support for the Garden project is being given by the relevant District Council officers. The Editor and staff of the Harborough Mail have become quite enthusiastic and are giving the branch good publicity and practical help, especially with research for the Book of Remembrance.

The Band Concert on Saturday, 11th November is fixed and the Northants and Leicestershire ACF Marching Band is booked for a performance during the week. Other activities are under consideration.

Congratulations, once again, George. And a big thank you to all members for helping again to make Market Harborough the Branch adjudged to have shown the greatest Endeavour out of the 45 Branches in Leicestershire and Rutland. So the Jack Quain Trophy is back!



Of the array of silver on display, a sizeable proportion is now in Harborough District. In addition to our collection, Great Glen won the award for the greatest percentage increase in Poppy Appeal Collections and Husbands Bosworth for the greatest proportionate increase in membership numbers.

Conference accepted your delegate's proposal that the next half-year conference on 24th June would be at Market Harborough.

Branch Meeting

Despite miserable weather there was an excellent turnout. Were members determined to participate in the business of the Branch or had they heard that Janet and Les Sewell were again providing the Buffet? (And it was a good one!!). The highlight of the evening was a presentation to fellow member Mrs Sybil Cramp of a picture frame in which had been mounted the Légion d'Honneur Certificate awarded to her husband, Robert. Photographer Andrew Carpenter arrived on cue to record the event and also to take photos of members grouped around our collection of silverware! Quite apart from the publicity value of such pictures when they appear in the local papers, it is important to have them for Branch Archives, of which we have so little from earlier years.

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Your comments and suggestions are wel-

Lest we Forget

We regret to have to announce the death of one of the last two surviving local Far-east POW's. Charlie Wadsworth was a very independent man, but the Branch was able provide help to make the last months of his life a bit more comfortable. Several members were able to honour him by attending his funeral at Little Bowden Church on 10th February.

Gurkha Widows

It is reported in LegionLetter that "Gurkha Widows will be awarded pensions (AFFP) for Service attributable deaths in Service of Gurkha Servicemen. The effective date of this is 26th May, 1999 with no retro-spection."

Legion Communications

In the recent LegionLetter, the Secretary General, Ian Townsend, writes about the progress being made to improve the means of communication in the RBL. He does not express it this way but the organisation is hardly in the forefront of the use of current methods when 8 of the 68 county & district offices still do not have a computer and only 25 (including Leics & Rutland) are on-line. However, it is obviously realised that the days of the quill pen are numbered and it is hoped that all these offices and those of the HQ departments will soon have more efficient access to the information used in an organisation similar in size and complexity to many national companies.

The date is Saturday, 20th May and the cost £10. Seats are still available. A stop en route will be at the Army Air Corps Museum. On the return there will be a refreshment stop at Newbury RBL Club. Ring Bob England (MH 464288)

Contacts

It was a pleasure to welcome to the February meeting, Dick Cousins and another member from Lutterworth Branch. Dick, their new Chairman, is keen to see more contact between branches and we look forward to the possibility of some joint activities. Details of our Social events are also being sent to other reasonably local branches on both sides of the County boundary.

Long Alley Skittles

Following the success of the event last September, another skittles evening will held at the Railway Inn, Kibworth Harcourt this Friday, 18th February. You may still be in time to book if you ring John Cox (MH 434983) straight away.

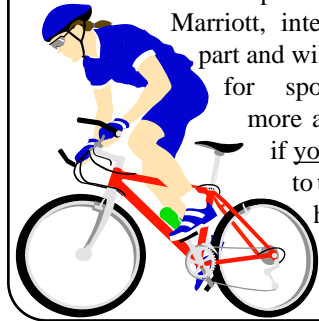
Coffee Morning

26th February. Harborough Theatre.

This is the first of this year's fund-raising events so let's get off to a good start by trying to do even better than we did last year. Thanks to those who have volunteered for duty or have given or promised items for the Tombola, Cake & "For Sale" Stalls & the Raffle. More helpers and contributions are needed so please come along - by 9am if possible. You can also help by publicising the event. Be sure to persuade your friends and neighbours to come!!!

Calling all Cyclists!

The RBL fund-raising event, "Pedal to Paris" this year will be from 7th to 10th September. Andrew Marriott, intends to take part and will be looking for sponsors. For more about that or if you would like to take part call him on MH 434805.



More Travel News

Betty West has leaflets about the British Legion Coachcard which gives discount travel on National Express Coaches and the special £10 Return to any UK Destination on their network until 6th April. Ring her on MH 434923 for details

Medals

By popular demand Mr George Gamble will be back on 12th April with more stories based on medals in his collection. Don't miss it!

Branch Birthday

On 23rd March it will be 77 years since the meeting in the old Assembly Rooms when this Branch was formed. The planned special celebratory dinner has not proved popular so there will now be a more modest evening pub meal, on Friday 24th March. Details in the March **In Touch**, but let Bob England know if you are interested. (MH 464288)

DIARY

- 18th Feb.* Skittles evening
- 23rd Feb. Branch Committee Meeting
- 26th Feb.* Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre
- 8th Mar. Branch Meeting + Birthday Competition
- 11th Mar.† Bill Burton at Desborough's Ritz Ballroom
- 24th Mar.* Tickets & details from 01536 760360
- 29th Mar. Birthday Supper - Details in next **In Touch**
- 4th Apr.** Branch Committee Meeting
- 12th Apr.* Branch Lunch - details later
- 25th May** Branch Meeting + "Medals"
- 24th June Coach trip to Winchester & Army Air Corps Museum £10 - seats still available
- 23rd Sep** Branch hosts County Half Year Conference
- 5 day visit to Normandy.

* See Box on this page for details
**Ring Bob England (MH 464288)

†Information from Desborough Branch