

# In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

## The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279



Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve

## Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

**91**

Years of Caring



**2014: WWI  
Centenary Year**



WWI Nurse  
(with her pet  
monkey) at the  
hospital featured  
on page 4

With thanks to Prime Life  
Ltd, parent company of  
Peaker Park Care Village  
Market Harborough, for  
printing this issue.

Issue 187  
April 2014

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Wednesday 14 May**  
Committee 8 May

Function Room, Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

## **Branch News**

### **March Branch Meeting**

Representatives of the four Cadet units had been invited to be presented with their equal shares of the £300 raised at the February coffee morning.



**ATC, Sea Cadets, St John & ACF cadets with Chairman, John Morley after the presentations**

The way in which the signing of the Military Covenant (see p7) last month had been carried out and especially the inadequate military and ex-service representation, had been discussed in Committee. A proposed letter to the Council stating these criticisms was agreed.

The 'after meeting' talk was by Hamish Macinnes of the Curzon Institute about the very important contribution to WWI made by the Commonwealth countries. You can read the background to the talk on <http://www1commonwealthcontribution.org>.

### **Happy Birthday!**

John Cox, who has joined the ranks of the octogenarians, has collected over £60 for the Ghurka Welfare Trust from money given as presents for his special birthday.

### **Anniversary Dinner**

A total of 50 persons attended the event at the M H Golf Club on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Guests of Honour were Sir Edward Garnier, our local M P, Colonel Robert Martin, RBL County President, and Mrs Martin.



We were also pleased to welcome Dave Atterbury, RBL County Chairman and Mrs Atterbury, representatives of RNA, the Sea Cadets and Desborough Branch RBL as well as other guests.



### **Cover Photo**

One of the nurses at the military 21<sup>st</sup> General Hospital in Alexandria whose photos are in the website at the centre of this month's main feature.

## **Remember This?**

### **A bit of Class!**

Even the location of the factory suggested an air of quality, approached as it was down a pleasant country road on the outskirts of Coventry. Inside the gates the Jaguar image was everywhere from the spacious, litter-free grounds with neatly clipped lawns, even the cups and saucers in which the welcome coffee was served to the immaculate vehicles awaiting collection for their individual new owners.

A tour of the Jaguar Car Assembly Plant is a fascinating though tiring experience. From the state of the art cinema, to a gallery illustrating all aspects of research, design, testing and production, one is taken by a well informed, uniformed guide to follow

the slow moving track to see how everything is added to the bare, but fully painted body shell (produced in another factory). Then on to where there is still real craftsmanship: where the luxury is produced, the components of leather and wood veneer.

The historic collection of vehicles and other exhibits in the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Centre rounds off a memorable visit. Thanks to the Photographic Society for inviting us to join them.

*This article appeared in April 2002. The whole issue (and all others) is accessible on the branch website under Newsletter/ In Touch Archives.*

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Extract from the Legion Magazine of May 1953 published in April 2001 issue of In Touch .

#### **A LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

"Dear Sir, What can be done with a branch like this? It has 250 members. It has had no committee meeting since last October. No one attends the annual general meeting except the Legion committee which is re-elected every year en bloc on the proposition of one member who attends specifically for that purpose.

If there is a Legion rally, about 18 turn up; if a club outing plenty go. The only activity of the branch (apart from the benevolent committee) is Remembrance Day and Poppy Day -- plus a Christmas whist drive.

This branch is dead . . . killed by the club. -- Name and Address supplied."

*Some members of our branch have bemoaned the fact that we do not have our own club, but the above letter may make them think again.--Ed 04/2001*

## **Hospital Visits**

made 98 years later

Tom Ashmore explains

Dad would have been amazed that nearly a century after his spell in hospital in 1916 he helped virtual visitors from Anglesea, Australia and New Zealand, through the photos and souvenirs he kept.

The link is the website I have produced about Dad's WWI Army Service. The section 'Alexandria 1916' mentions 'a Naval engineer named Abbott', a newspaper, the Egyptian Gazette and Nazha Gardens.

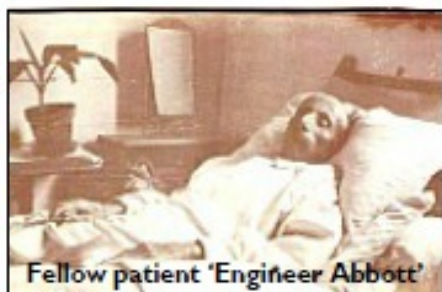
Last August I received an email starting,

*'Came across your very interesting web site this afternoon – and noticed the connection with H.M.S. Tara, a vessel I've been researching for a number of years. H.M.S. Tara was in fact the L & N.W.R. Co S.S. Hibernia, a steam packet or ferry sailing between Holyhead, Anglesey and Kingstown (now Dun Loaghaire, Ireland).*

*She was taken over by the Royal Navy in August 1914, renamed, armed, her crew (mostly of Holyhead) doubled and with a sprinkling of R.N. and R.N.R. personnel she was sent off to war. She was sunk off North Africa 5.11.15, the U boat responsible towing the survivors ashore in their lifeboats and where they were handed over to the Senussi (pro German Arabs) who took them into the interior and where they remained for 5 months until a*

*chance rescue by an armoured column on 17.3.16.*

*Tara carried a crew of 104 of which 18 died either during the sinking or in captivity, most survivors were suffering from dysentery, lack of food, medical care, etc. On returning to Alex the officers were sent to the Ras el Tin Hospital whilst the crew were sent to No 21 General Hospital and presumably where they met your father!*



Fellow patient 'Engineer Abbott'

*Not only am I researching the story of the Tara but have nearly finished writing a book of the story. In the book I have*

*included a biography of each member of the crew and to date have photographs of 84 possibly 85 individuals and I would like to include a photograph of "Engineer Abbott" as is shown in your web site.*

*By the way Engineer Abbot was in fact Quartermaster Robert Abbitt of Holyhead, and had been suffering dreadfully from dysentery, etc since December 1915 and many a time they thought he would not pull through, but he did survive and died aged 73 in May 1926!*

*Regards  
Geraint S. Griffith.'*

With my reply I sent an enhanced copy of the photo Dad had taken of his fellow patient but also said,

'Yours is the second request I have had recently for an image from the

website. The Australian Broadcasting Company are preparing a mini series featuring WW1 Australian nurses (ANZAC Girls) and their researchers found on my site photographs of the Egyptian Gazette, dated 26 April 1916 reporting the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landings which they would like to appear in the film. I still have that newspaper carefully preserved and kept under my bed!



That 'second request' came as

*Dear Tom,  
My name is Lucy and I am working in the art department for an ABC TV mini-series shot here in Australia called Anzac Girls. The show follows a group of ANZAC nurses during WW1. I stumbled upon your site and am wondering if you can help me out. I've found your photographs of your Dad's copy of the Egyptian Gazette and I'm wondering if you might be able to take photos of each of the pages again and as cleanly as possible? We're working to make a faithful replica of (the original of) your Dad's copy.'*

After much careful flattening and photographing I sent new images and information about the size, thickness and texture of the paper that Lucy requested.

I learn from my recent Internet searches for 'ANZAC Girls' that filming took place in and near Adelaide using South Australian TV studios and help with creating sets with authentic looking backgrounds. The first instalment is expected to be screened at about the time of ANZAC Day. I hope it will be available on the net so I can see if and how they use the newspaper!

Then, to my surprise, in December I had this email from New Zealand,

*Dear Tom  
I read your account (of The first ANZAC commemoration service in Cairo) with great interest as I'm currently writing the story of the NZ nurses during the Gallipoli campaign, from April 1914 when the first nurses leave New Zealand to April 1915. The book ends just after the commemoration service. I was excited to read that you have photographed the Egyptian Gazette with the accounts of the service and wondered if you would mind letting me see any reference to the service at the ANZAC Hostel conducted by the Bishop of Jerusalem.*

*The book is part of the Scholastic NZ WW1 series for schools and it is due for release in April 2015 and I have to have it finished by the end of February this year.*

*Kind regards,  
Diana Menefy*

Following my reply with which I sent a photo of the Gazette page giving full coverage of the event, I received,

Dear Tom

*This is brilliant! Thank you so much. I got the detail from 'The Other Anzacs' by Peter Rees. Two Australian Nursing Sisters, Anne Moreton and May Tilton had recorded it in their diaries along with their impressions but nowhere near the amount of information that is on your Dad's page. I will acknowledge him in my author's notes I can't believe the wonderful coincidence. I was searching the web for Nuzha Gardens WWI to check the correct spelling for Nuzha as my nurse's hand writing wasn't clear on the photo I had.*

That name rang a bell so I wrote back saying that Dad took photos of the gardens (which are on the website)



Lake in Nuzha Gardens

when he was convalescing after his spell in 21st General hospital where the nurse, 'whose writing was not clear', may have worked and visited Nuzha.

The website which provides the basis of this story is  
[www.greatwaranddad.net](http://www.greatwaranddad.net) Editor

## Miscellany

### April Centenary Snippets

1914

Yarmouth pier is destroyed by a suffragette bomb.

1915

King George is prepared to give up alcohol "as an example" to others.

1916

The Military Medal is introduced.

1917 Airship designer, Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, dies.

1918

The Penny Post is abolished.



**BUY**

**ONE**

**GET**

**ONE**

**FREE**

**OFFER**

**ENDS**

**1ST. APRIL**

Sign in the window of a Barcelona Travel Agent

**Go Away**

Small ad in the Rugby Advertiser  
**Ladies bowels jacket & skirt.**  
**Waterproof. £12**

Notice in the All Fools Times  
**Please note that the meeting on 31st April has been cancelled.**

## ***RBL County News***

**County Office and Contact Point**  
As was mentioned at the Anniversary dinner, arrangements are being finalised for accommodation in a suitable location in Leicester.

### **Armed Forces Covenant**

As briefly reported last month, Harborough District Council has formally committed to support the armed forces community. The photo of the signing ceremony was of the Council Chairman, Chief Executive and Leader with the Commanding Officer, Defence Animal Centre and RBL County Chairman.

The agreement is part of a national scheme launched by the Ministry of Defence to help improve links between the military and civilians. By signing the covenant the council agrees to:

- Mark and remember past sacrifices.*
- Encourage activities that integrate armed forces into community life.*
- Signpost any services for housing needs.*
- Encourage armed forces to take up any benefits and discounts they are entitled to.*
- Raise awareness of disability adaptations grants and advice available.*

The Council has appointed an Armed Forces Champion, Cllr David Beaty, who will be a first point of contact for any serving or ex-service, or other charity/community groups with service connections who may need local authority input/approval.

## **LUNCH AT THE ANGEL**



for good food and good company

### **2 MAY**      **MEET IN THE BAR AT NOON** **MENU**

Roasted British leg of lamb  
with Yorkshire pudding, roast  
potatoes & gravy (can be gf)

Oven baked cod loin  
sat on creamy garlic & brandy-laced  
mushrooms & diced potatoes (gf)

Escalope of British turkey on a bed of  
sautéed potatoes with a tangy  
kumquat & cranberry glaze

Oven baked ½ aubergine with straw  
vegetable filling with a cheese glaze  
sat on a bed of mash potato with  
tomato sauce (v) (gf)

All served with a selection of vegetables  
- - - - -

Fresh fruit salad with fruit sorbet (gf)

Summer pudding with clotted cream  
& Purbeck clotted cream ice cream

Rich chocolate torte with Purbeck  
honeycomb ice cream (v)

- - - - -

Tea or coffee with chocolate mints

(v) = vegetarian      (gf) = gluten free

£8.50 - pay on the day

To book, ring Les Moore (01858 463112) before 19 Apr. To cancel a booking you must phone The Angel (01858 462702) before 10 am on the day or you will be charged.

## What's Going On?

### Forthcoming Events

- 25 Apr ANZAC Day 7am Leicester  
14 May After meeting talk- about  
WWI & Commonwealth  
War Graves Commission  
17/18 National Conference -  
May Torquay  
11 Jun After meeting talk- VSO in  
Nepal  
21 Jun AFD Leicester  
29 Jun AFD Welland Park  
5 Jul County RBL Summer Meeting  
at Birstall  
13 Aug Branch meeting as a possible  
Peaker Park joint event

#### Welfare

If you are aware of any one who qualifies for, and may benefit from the Legion welfare services please contact **Betty Ramsay on 01858 434923**

#### RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week on Freephone **0800 802 8080** for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

#### In Touch Next Month

'Just Nuisance', Centenary Snippets, 'Remember this?', News, etc.

### Branch Contacts

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#### Branch Website

[www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough)

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