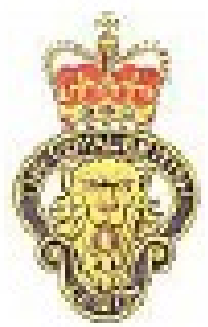


# In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

## The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279

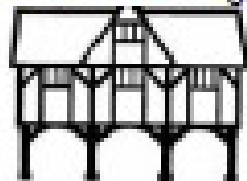


### LIVE ON

To the memory of the fallen and the future of the living

### 92

Years of Caring



## Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

### Centenary Year of 1915



The wearer of this cap badge may have been under age. See p4

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Wednesday**  
**Committee**

**Issue 201**  
**June 2015**

**Function Room, Conservative Club,**  
**Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough**

## Branch News

### May Branch Meeting

Vice Chairman, Brian Thomas took the Chair and reported that the Committee had approved a proposal to replace the painted timber crosses for the Garden of Remembrance with those made of plastic. The VE70 lunch at The Angel had been very successful and well attended and with those from outside the Branch but the event on the Square had not been well supported by the public. A few branch members had attended the VE70 event at the Lenthall House Care Home. The Special General Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June would be to decide if Husbands Bosworth should become a Sub Branch of ours. A 'Later life Matters' event on 19 May would include a manned 'RBL' stand. Youth Officer, Betty Ramsay reported on the interesting Scouts St George's Day event to which she had been invited. The Branch had been represented at the funeral of the wife of our President, Andrew Granger. Information was given about the 'Door to Door' RBL fundraising scheme. 'Donations in lieu of flowers' had been received. In his 'In Touch' report the Editor stressed the need to find someone to take on that duty if members still wanted the newsletter.

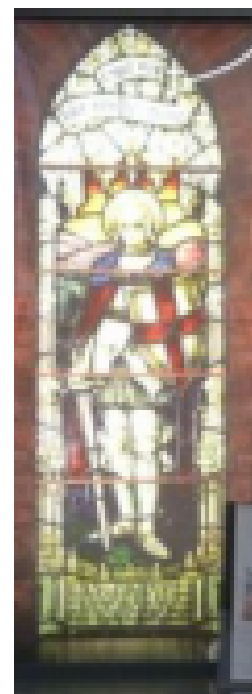
## Say it with Flowers

A beautiful bouquet of flowers was presented to Con Halsall to mark her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday and in recognition of all she has done for the branch over many years.

### After Meeting Presentation

Denis Kenyon gave an interesting and well prepared description of the *Leicester City, County and Rutland War Memorials at Risk Project* of which he is a founder. The Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled the recovery and restoration of neglected or forgotten memorials and to secure a base in which they can be displayed.

Denis gave many well illustrated examples of memorial boards, plaques and stained glass windows, some of



which had been moved from where they were originally installed. For some, much research is needed to trace their original location and purpose. Volunteers can become involved in this research but also can learn the skills of restoration and conservation.

An important aspect of the Project is remembering the names on the preserved memorials to

*Continued on page 7*

### Cover Photo

The Royal Sussex Regiment Cap Badge as shown in the Wikipedia article about the Regiment.

## Remember These?

### Birthday Dinner 2001

AS BRIEFLY REPORTED in the last edition, the Dinner was held at the Bull's Head, Clipston, on 16th March. 19 members and their guests enjoyed an excellent 3-course meal. For each dinner ordered (at a cost of only £10) the landlord of the Bull's Head donated £1 to the Poppy Appeal. His generosity did not end there either. After the sweet course, he presented our party with a birthday cake

complete with the RBL badge, in icing, on the top. So you can see that it was quite a bargain for those who attended.

On behalf of all those who were present, we give our thanks to the landlord and his staff and to Mr Barry Thorpe (Social Committee member) for organising the evening. A raffle run by Mr John Cox raised £20 for Social Committee funds.

### Oh! What a Night it Was



Eighty persons, members and these special and other guests sat down to a first class meal and danced to music by Dave Hawke. (This was in 2004, the first time at the Golf Club - Ed)

### A 2003 Special Occasion

The Eightieth Anniversary Dinner on 21st March was held at the Wellington Suite, Market Harborough with catering by The Langton Arms, Church Langton. The Principal Guests were District Council Chairman, Councillor Mrs Beryl Jones and Mr Jones and RBL

County President, Lt. Col. Peter Roffey. A total of 78 people were present including County Secretary, Mo Watson and her husband, friends from Desborough and Husbands Bosworth branches, RNA, ATC, ACF and representatives of Harborough Band and Branch members and their guests.

The Loyal Toast was proposed by Hilary Brazil, and Peter Wilson proposed the Toast, "Our Guests. The Toast, "The Royal British Legion" was given by Peter Roffey. Dave Hawke provided music as background and for dancing. Hilary Brazil and John Cox raised £162 in the raffle and Betty Ramsay acted as photographer.

Mark Hudson sent a message apologising for his absence and wishing everyone a very happy evening. We did not know then that his mother had died that afternoon.

# *My Mum's Uncle Jim*

by John Cook

It was the gift, from my daughter, of an excellent and thought provoking book, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* by Richard Van Emden that prompted me to revisit the partially researched history of Mum's Uncle Jim.

I recall clearly the story she told me about James Henham who attempted to enrol in the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) at the age of 15, was rejected and subsequently crossed the county border into Sussex to be accepted by the Royal Sussex Regiment. He served in France and won the DCM at Passchendae but would not acknowledge it, considering his part in the action with two comrades as being prompted by anger rather than bravery. He became a Publican near Paddock Wood, Kent, married, had no children and welcomed regular visits from her where she frequently served at the bar and developed an affection for the family Pug dog.

She lost contact with him largely through her marriage in 1931 to my father, a career soldier, and due to James and his wife moving to Dover just before the travel constraints of the second world war.

With the opportunities offered by the Internet I decided to set about comparing her recall and perception with whatever 'facts' could be determined.

The census return of 1901 shows James residing in Yalding, near Paddock Wood aged 2 years, BMD Registers for Maidstone District record his Birth in the third quarter of 1898. Therefore at the outbreak of

war in August 1914 he would have been at or near 16 years old well below the accepted norm for other than some Territorial enlistment and certainly below the overseas conflict age of 19. When did he enlist? Sadly when the 'Burnt Records' were consulted his had not survived the Blitz. Did he



**After her death, John found this snapshot of his Mum as a young person with a Pug dog.**

attempt to join the Buffs? This is a mystery, but as he had two older regular army cousins in that regiment it may have prompted him to try. What appeared to be a brick wall was overcome when I found an excellent website which lists by Name/Number

and Hometown nearly all of the original enlistments who bore the SD prefix to their army number in the Royal Sussex Regiment.

These battalions, the 11 to 14 were designated the South Downs Battalions and, rather like the Northern Pals, were raised by a local dignitary, in this case by a local MP, Lt Col George Lowther. Most enlistments were from Sussex and became known affectionately as 'Lowthers Lambs'. - James is listed as SD2446 from Paddock Wood and in 12 Bn. Initial enlistments were on 3 November 1914 but SD's above No 2414 seem to have been recruited as late as 10 June 1915. Lowthers Lambs, with the exception of 14 Bn who were now largely dispersed to other regiments, (my Grandad amongst them) embarked for France on 5 March 1916.

James would by this time be around 17 years 6 months. Did the Battalion do the correct thing and retain him at the depot? Or did he sail with them?

The 12th certainly experienced a very active time on the Western Front including the battle of the Boars Head at Richebourg on the 3 June 1916. Intended as a diversionary action prior to the

Somme offensive it was one of the disasters which befell Kitchener's armies and became known as 'The Day Sussex Died' because of the devastating casualty rate.

With replacements, not SD numbered, the 12th soldiered on until 8 Feb 1918 when continuing heavy casualties caused them to amalgamate with 11 Bn. The only positive information on Uncle Jim comes with an entry in the War Diaries of 11 Bn at Lisques on 31/5/18 where it states, 'The following decorations were awarded during the month' and under DCM it lists 2446 Ne C Henham (initial wrong but correct army number). Also listed 593 L/Cpl Sprunt & 1766 Sgt Golden.



The London Gazette of 3 Sept 1918 bears the entry: Sd12446 Pte J. Henham, R. Suss R (Paddock Wood) For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. With a Sgt & a L/cpl he entered a tank, and by his coolness and accurate handling of a Lewis Gun in the tank he was instrumental in checking the advance of the enemy, causing many casualties and taking 14 prisoners.

Despite searching the war diaries of both 11 & 12 Bns I have yet to establish the specifics of this action

Continued on page 6

though an entry for Revelon on 2 March 18 records 'Enemy artillery blew up derelict tanks opposite right of Bn front'.

The dates in the war diaries suggests that the Royal Sussex took further heavy casualties in efforts to stem the German counter offensive of March 1918 & by May the 18th the 11 & 13 Bns became a composite Bn with only two under strength companies forming a composite Bn forming a cadre to train the newly arrived American forces. Was my mum right in detail? It is certain that he won the DCM, but at Passchendaele? Awards sometimes lagged well behind the event and the baffle raged from July 1917 to Nov 1917. A divisional memoir states 116 Bde faced Mousetrap Farm/Cheddar Villa, the division was supported by 8 tanks ift its attack with 11/12/13 Bns Royal Sussex. I prefer the March records but who knows?

James is entered in the Post Office Directories and Kelly's Directories from 1922 to 1938 as Publican at the Royal Oak, Chainhurst, Kent nr Paddock Wood and died at Dover in 1947. Neither the Directories or Obituraries mention the DCM which he was entitled to use, thus bearing out mum's contention of his reluctance to recognize it

In conclusion my mother got a lot of it right though, accuracy of age

becomes somewhat irrelevant in the scheme of things. James, like so many of the hundreds of thousands old and young, who faced tribulations we fortunate ones can scarcely imagine, did what they saw as their duty and didn't talk about it. In life and in death 'we will remember them'.

Footnote 1. Sadly Sgt Golden already holder of the MM was killed in action shortly after the notification of his DCM. L/Cpl Sprunt appears to have survived the war.

Footnote 2 My mother is recognized in the local paper as being a sad loss as Secretary of The Paddock Wood British Legion on the occasion of her marriage to Sgt Instructor Cook APTS. The Legion involvement was news to me but apparently revealed to my wife, Marney many years ago. The duplicity of women!!

## *Miscellany*

### June 1915 News Items

- 6<sup>th</sup> - 24 die, 49 injured in Zeppelin raid on East Coast.
- 11<sup>th</sup> - Serbian troops invade Albania and take Tirana.
- 15<sup>th</sup> "New Derby" run at Newmarket as troops occupy Epsom course.
- 21<sup>st</sup> - £910m War loan terms discussed.
- 28<sup>th</sup> Liner Armenia sunk by German submarine.

Continued from page 2

reassure their descendents that their sacrifices are not forgotten.

Another kind of risk Denis mentioned was the Cottage Hospital Memorial and strongly expressed his opinion that it should be moved to the Memorial Gardens.

Applause and the Chairman's thanks showed how much the talk had been appreciated.

### ATC Cadet Successes

Our affiliated 1084 Squadron was at RAF Wittering on 17<sup>th</sup> May for the ATC Wing Band competition in which they performed brilliantly, securing 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Full Band, Fanfare, Solo Drum, Drum Major, Uniform, Overall classes and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Percussion and 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> in Solo Bugle.

Congratulations. We are proud of you.

### June Branch Lunch

Another good turn-out with 25 people enjoying The Angel's fare.

### Special General Meeting

Vice Chairman, Brian Thomas introduced David Atterbury, County Chairman, to explain what the proposal that Husbands Bosworth Branch becoming a sub-branch of ours, involved. Extra Treasurer work was accepted, and the proposal was put to the vote and approved unanimously by the Committee and five other members present.

## LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

**7 JULY**

**MEET IN THE  
BAR AT NOON**

### MENU

Supreme of British chicken sat on mash potato draped with a chunky mushroom, tomato & tarragon sauce (gf)

Smoked haddock sat on fried potatoes in hollandaise sauce (gf)

Roast shoulder of Welsh lamb with roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding & gravy (can be gf)

*All served with a selection of vegetables*

Duo of field mushrooms filled with spinach topped with poached egg & hollandaise sauce & side of new potatoes (gf) (v)

- - - - -

Panacotta topped w/ morello cherries laced with Disarrono (gf)

Rich chocolate torte with strawberries & mini jug of cream (v)

Fresh fruit salad with fruity sorbet (v)

- - - - -

Tea or Coffee and Mints

£ 8.50 Pay on the Day

To book, contact Kathie Morley, email [kathiemorley@talktalk.net](mailto:kathiemorley@talktalk.net) or phone 01858 419714 - To cancel, ring **The Angel** (01858 462702) before 10 am on the day or you will be charged

## What's Going On?

### Forthcoming Events

- 20 Jun AFD Coffee Morning -Theatre  
22 Jun Armed Forces Week Flag Raising - 10.15 am Church Square  
28 Jun Armed Forces Day Event- Welland Park  
4 Jul RNA Cheese & Wine - 7 .pm @ Gt Bowden village hall. £6 incl. 2 glasses of wine  
8 July Branch meeting + talk ' Project Patriot'  
19 Jul London Poppy Walk by Ramsay Ramblers who ask you to sponsor them  
24 Oct Poppy Appeal Launch 10.30 am  
31 Oct Poppy Appeal Raffle Draw

#### 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 0808 802 8080 for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

#### In Touch Next Month

'Coachman', 'Miscellany, 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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