

# 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



Pages 4,5 & 6 explain this

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Wednesday 14 October (AGM)**  
**Committee 8 October**

**Issue 204**  
**September 2015**

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

## *Branch News*

### August Branch Meeting

There was no meeting but the Chairman had come prepared to apologise to anyone who had missed the cancellation notice. Nobody did come but, as arranged, the Editor

brought the batches of In Touch for collection. This resulted in most of the Delivery Team and the Chairman having an informal chat and drink.

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### August Branch Lunch

The best attendance for a long time meant that the meal was served in the large dining room with its attractive skylight. The tables were

arranged in U-formation comfortably seating the twenty eight people present. Some are in these photos.



Cover Photo

The badge of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry  
The image was included by author with the text of his article.

## ***Remember This and him?***

Please allow me to introduce, dear Reader, the delectable June. A year or so older than me, she had left school and was working in an office. She was very good looking, had a super figure and a mass of wavy, auburn hair. I couldn't believe my luck! She was a good dancer and partnered me when I joined the youth club classes to be initiated into the intricacies of the waltz, quickstep and foxtrot. I learned quickly and we became a great dancing partnership as we glided across the floor to music from gramophone records. June and I became regulars at the twice-weekly hops in St Stephen's Church Hall where the music was live. These sessions cost one shilling and sixpence (7½p) and, as I did not have that sort of money, my salaried young lady would subsidise me. The band was normally a trio with saxophone, piano and drums and three tunes were played for each dance. The usual form of introduction by the MC went, "Take your partners for a quickstep", or some other dance, and there were variations, such as 'Lady's Invitation' or 'Gentleman's Excuse-me', when a chap could tap you on the shoulder and take over your partner. Apart from dancing, there was not a lot to do in the evenings and at weekends, apart from walking. Going to a pub was not even remotely considered,



but we were reasonably content with our lifestyle. I was studying for my School Certificate (which June had already achieved) and, during the fine summer days leading up to the exams, we went to a popular local open space called Hilly Fields. Here we reclined on the grass and I was coached by June in various, mainly scholastic, subjects. Having a regular girl friend did wonders for my confidence, so, as well as determined attempts to swot up for my exams, I did initiate certain extra-mural activities. Not that there was anything like the freedom 'enjoyed' by today's young people. We 'petted', as it was quaintly called, which by current standards was not very adventurous. Frustrations were overcome by respect for each other and the accepted code of behaviour, by which the majority of young people abided in those far off, innocent days. Nevertheless, it was a memorable and very enjoyable summer, and in my case, not just because it brought the end of the war. Incidentally, perhaps unsurprisingly, I didn't achieve the School Certificate!

*This, from Issue 84, September 2005, is an extract from 'Those Lazy; Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer '45' by 'Anon' who would now admit to being the then Editor George.*

## ***A Rifle Brigade Exchange Officer's Reflections on two years with The Princess Patricias Canadian Light Infantry***

**by Major General Sir Michael Carleton-Smith, CBE, DL**

In late 1957 the 1st Bn The Rifle Brigade returned home after a three-year operational tour in Kenya and Malaya. I was due for a tour with the Parachute Regiment but was greeted by the Regimental Adjutant on board the troop ship as it docked at Southampton with a change of plan. I was to be the first post war and the



second ever Rifle Brigade exchange officer with our Allied regiment, the PPCLI. Thus I sailed in the summer of 1958 as a first class passenger in a luxury Cunard liner. It was not the first time I had sailed to Canada. Eleven years earlier, as a sixteen-year-old, I had spent a fascinating summer holidays with the British Schools Exploring Society's

expedition surveying for the first map of an area of virgin, fly infested, forest in Northern Quebec. This time I landed in Montreal and made my way to Ottawa for briefings at the British High Commission.

I was informed that as August was the Canadian Army's leave month there was little point in flying straight out to Victoria where I was to join the 1st Bn. Instead I was to buy a car and drive out and conduct an interesting visit programme they had laid on. The first port of call was back to Montreal where the Hamilton-Gault's had kindly invited me to lunch. It was an impressive start to my time with The Patricias to meet the revered founder and learn much about the Regiment and the background to our alliance. Sadly only a few weeks after my arrival in Victoria I was flown back to march through the then snow clad streets of Montreal as an honorary pall bearer in his funeral.

In those days much of the trans-Canada highway was unsurfaced so I made good time westward through the States and turned north through Calgary to visit the 2nd Bn in Edmonton. There I received a warm welcome, which extended into an arrangement that I would spend my

second year with them. I had a weekend's duck hunting near Wainwright with the GOC Western Command, and another fishing near Lake Louise with brother officers. Then on to Victoria for another warm welcome. The Canadian soldiers were mostly older than our teenage national servicemen and I was



impressed by their professionalism. We also did the traditional drill I was familiar with from Sandhurst rather than the quick march of the rifle regiments. I was proud to be asked to command the representative Patricia guard on the tri-service march past to welcome the Queen in down town Victoria on the evening before she presented the battalion with new colours. I later received a copy of the London Evening Standard describing the event and saying that the Queen had asked the Governor 'who is the officer in the light coloured uniform'? He replied, presumably prompted by an aide, 'that Ma'am is Captain Carleton-Smith, on exchange from the Rifle Brigade Band'!

During my time with the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn I was sent on an arctic warfare instructors course at Fort Churchill. This was not actually my first trip to the arctic as I had spent the Christmas '51/New Year '52 on leave from Germany on a private three-man expedition to arctic northern Finland when the sun never came over the horizon. At Fort Churchill in the springtime, though extremely cold, at least the sun remained in view throughout my time there. I also flew up again with the RCAF on a resupply mission to the Dew Line radar stations north of Alert Bay. On another trip I flew to the Aleutian Islands with the USAF and drove back south from Anchorage with one of the aircrew on every type of road surface on the first leg to Whitehorse. After a marvellous year of soldiering, travelling, wenching, running and even some amateur dramatics I was due six weeks' leave before reporting to Edmonton. My last English girl friend had turned up unexpectedly in Vancouver so we drove round the States together before putting her on a boat in New York. We next saw each other each with spouses and three school-aged sons. Two of mine incidentally became decorated SAS officers and the eldest is now a major general. I covered 10,400 miles driving round the perimeter of the USA and briefly popping in to Mexico and Havana still crowded with Castro's long haired jungle veterans.

I arrived with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn in time to welcome the first of the winter snow. They were an airborne/air transportable arctic warfare battalion and I was privileged to be 2ic of the jump company. When I had qualified as a parachutist on a Sandhurst leave some nine years



earlier we had jumped without reserve chutes. It was rather less stressful now being equipped with them, though jumping onto snow covered frozen lakes had it's own problems. I had been laboriously studying for the British Staff College exam by a correspondence course and with the exam imminent I chose to act as dispatcher on the upcoming exercise on which about eighteen jumpers were injured when the snow was blown off the ice on the DZ. At the summer brigade concentration at Wainwright the athletics championships were a major event and each year my battalion team managed to win aided by my winning the half-mile, mile and half-mile final leg of the medley relay in the same afternoon. I was never young

enough or fit enough to do so again. The fitness regime also rather curtailed my contribution to the Mess Friday 'happy hour' celebrations. For which I seemed to be generously forgiven.

I managed to pass into the Staff College with a 'competitive' entry guaranteeing a place on the next course. So after another enjoyable and busy year I headed east and put my much-travelled little Renault Dauphine onto another liner and sailed back to a much changed England. Or was it me that had changed? And if not - why not? I had much to be grateful for and a host of happy memories of my time with The Patricias.

### *Miscellany*

#### September 1915 News Items

- 2<sup>nd</sup> R N sink 4 Turkish transports in the Dardenelles
- 4<sup>th</sup> War Office orders wearing long boots rather than puttees
- 7<sup>th</sup> TUC Congress resolves to oppose conscription
- 18<sup>th</sup> War is costing UK £3.5 million a day
- 21<sup>st</sup> Income tax standard rate increased to 2s 11½p per £
- 21<sup>st</sup> Stonehenge with 30 acres down-land auctioned for £6000

Take one from nineteen and leave twenty. How?

What is the difference between six dozen dozen and half a dozen dozen?

Answers on p8

## RBL News

Husbands Bosworth Branch has decided not to become a Sub-Branch of our branch at the present time.

Leicestershire Pop In Centres Susan Grogan, Advice & Information Officer informs us that a new office in Leicester has been negotiated. She and the Welfare Officer are moving into the VAL Building on Newarke Street, Leicester, hopefully before the end of September. She will be holding a regular Pop In every Thursday afternoon 2 until 4pm, in the ground floor reception area. Their permanent office will be on the second floor.

In Market Harborough, Susan has arranged to have Pop In space on the ground floor of the Symington building in the Council's Customer Services area on a trial basis during September, still from 2 pm to 4 pm on the second and fourth Monday.

### County News

An Autumn Meeting has been arranged for Saturday 26th September, following the National Chairmen's Conference. This will be held in central Leicester. Betty Ramsay was surprised to receive the paper work for this for, although she is County Conference Committee Secretary, she would not have dealt with such matters previously.

## LUNCH

### AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

## 6 OCTOBER

**MEET IN THE  
BAR AT NOON**

### MENU

Roast leg of lamb  
w/ Yorkshire pudding, roast  
potatoes & gravy (can be gf)

Slow cooked beef & ale casserole  
w/roast potatoes & herb scone

Field mushroom stuffed w/ spinach  
topped w/ poached egg draped in  
hollandaise sauce (gf) (v)

All served with a selection of vegetables

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Fresh fruit salad w/ cream (gf) (v)

Warm spiced apple tart & creamy  
custard (v)

Crème brûlée cup w/ shortbread  
biscuits (can be gf) (v)

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Tea or Coffee and Mints  
£ 9.25 Pay on the Day  
Please note increase in price.

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 Sep Battle of Britain Service @ St Nicholas Church, Little Bowden @ 10.45 am
- 3 Oct RBL Coffee Morning @ Theatre
- 10 Oct RAFA Coffee Morning @ Theatre
- 14 Oct Branch AGM- see Nomination Form enclosed
- 17 Oct Sea Cadets Coffee Morning @ Theatre
- 24 Oct Poppy Appeal Launch @ 10.30 am on The Square
- 31 Oct Festival of Remembrance @ De Montfort Hall

### 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

'My 17 Years in the Army', 'Miscellany, Remember This?', News, etc.

### Branch Contacts

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##### Secretary

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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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