

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

93

Years of



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1916



Pte Sturmer may have died before receiving this medal to which he was entitled.

See page 4

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 11 May
Committee 5 May

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Issue 211
April 2016

Branch News

March Branch Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming our President, Andrew Granger. Business matters dealt with included nominating John Standish as County Chairman, concern about the small number of bookings for the Anniversary Dinner, discontinuing the February Coffee Mornings because of poor support from members and the public, Standard Bearer, Hilary Brazil, and Branch delegate, John Standish, will attend the RBL Annual Conference at Eastbourne, Membership Secretary, Myra Grewcock, is still trying to resolve problems arising from the new payment method, details of the Armed Forces Day Parade and Drumhead Service are being worked on, to celebrate the Queen's Birthday there will be a tri-service lunch on 7th June.

The next item on the Agenda was

PRESENTATIONS

at which Acting County Chairman John Standish spoke of the awards the Branch had received and described the criteria the County use to justify them. He then presented the Jack Quain Trophy for Endeavour to our Chairman and the Ron West Shield for Efficiency to Secretary, Betty Ramsay.

After Meeting Talk

Dr John Sutton gave a comprehensive account of the Leicestershire Regiment's involvement in WWI with 'on screen' text and images to support his spoken words. Regimental organisation and how it fitted in to the higher echelons of the the Army were described. The role of each of the battalions was mentioned and information about the Commanding Officers of some of them was given. Dr. Sutton described their actions during the four years of the War and with maps gave details of the battles in which they fought. Casualties suffered were enumerated and memorials on which they are commemorated were shown. From the depth of his research, his obvious knowledge and how he presents this, Dr Sutton can be truly called an expert and the appreciation of his talk was clear from the applause from his audience.

Please Note

To help to cover the cost of some talks, the Mess Fee paid at Branch meetings is to be increased from 50p to £1. A raffle is also to be introduced.

Anniversary Dinner

This annual Branch event was notable for its lack of support from Branch members with only 19 attending of the 38 people present which was far

Continued on p7

Cover Photo

India Medal 1895 with the Punjab Frontier Clasp 1897/8 as displayed on the Internet

Remember These? (From April 2006)

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - HARLETT HARBOUROUGH BRANCH

1923
83rd Anniversary
2006 **Dinner**

Friday 24th March 2006



President Peter Wilson; Clr. John Pierce, Chairman Harborough District Council; Mrs Pierce; George Fleming, Edward Garnier MP; Richard Foster, Leicestershire RBL Field Officer; Mark Hudson, our Chairman.

The occasion was much enjoyed by all and many thanks to those who helped or donated to make it another successful evening. The raffle raised £124, with the help of John Cox and the Desborough Branch. There were two auctions when a Travelsphere voucher raised £50, and the half-lamb from John and Pat Walker went for £35 - making a grand total of £209.



Dick Fulford, Christopher, Marion and Peter Vine, Tom and Joan Ashmore, Joy and Norman Banting.



On the left - Pam England, George and Kwan-Yee Fleming, Mary Symon, Joan McMillin and Bob England.

Bernard's Hamilcar Arrives by Post!



Captain Bernard Halsall MC piloted this Hamilcar glider to a landing near a village

in Belgium. The occasion was witnessed and well-remembered by Bral Leo, a young boy at the time. A couple of years ago, Bral made contact with the Branch through our website and later Bernard was invited to visit the village. This painting of the scene has now been issued as an airmail postage stamp..



The 'Burnt Records' - a Hidden Surprise

by John Cook

Whilst searching through family members WWI records in the 'Burnt Records' of the National Archives much to my surprise I came across the attestation papers of John Albert Sturmer, a great uncle on the maternal side who died in India in 1897.

Whilst I knew of him I had not expected to find documents relating to him in this particular batch of records. From early years I always had amongst my 'treasures' a white horsehair plume centred by a brass regimental crest on a tubular mount, all contained in worn leather pouch which fitted like a glove. This I understood had been owned by great uncle John.

My mother only knew vaguely that he had been in a mounted regiment. Having only had this basic information it was so gratifying to find, on line, four very charred but in parts quite legible attestation papers relating to John Albert Sturmer of the 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards

(nickname The Mounted Micks). He came from Yalding in Kent but his enlistment took place at Newbridge. My first thoughts went toward two towns in Ireland but I then discovered that there are fourteen Newbridges in the UK with one in East Sussex which regionally is so close to his home area as to make this the most likely enlistment point. He enrolled on the 28th April 1890 as a single man aged 21 years and his occupation as a gardener. He is described as being 5ft



The plume and helmet here are worn by a Sgt Major of the 4th Dragoon Guards

8in tall, weight 139lbs, with a fresh complexion, blue eyes and light brown hair. His distinctive features are described, but only partially discernable, as anchor left ?? and abdomen scar on ??

One can conclude that the former is a tattoo somewhere on the torso and the latter could be accidental or surgical in origin. On the following sheet is his army number is given as 3616 and a notation regarding pay, 2nd Gc pay 24.4.90 followed by terse note 'Died in India 29.10.97'. The final entry on this page reads, somewhat ironically, as 'Date of Discharge

29.10.97. Length of Service 7yrs 187days.' The last & least scorched sheet shows his Home Service as

4yrs 141 days, Service in India 3yrs 48 days. The maths don't quite add up page to page but two days adrift isn't too bad! The last discernable entry gives his Father as George Sturmer and his residence as Yalding (this adjoins Paddock Wood) .

A website dedicated to the 4th Dragoons shows that he was entitled to the India Medal 1895 with the Punjab Frontier Clasp 1897/8.

Further online research shows him recorded on a memorial in Christs Church, Rawlapindi which reads,



"Dedicated by their comrades to the memory of the following NCO's and men of the 4th Dragoon Guards who died or were killed in action during their service in the Punjab from Oct 1894 to 21 Jan 1903"

There follows a list of 24 NCO's and 64 Privates including Pte J.A.Sturmer. To date my research has failed to find his resting place, many of the graveyards pre CWGC have either been lost through neglect or in some cases post independence vandalism. His remaining records do not show

cause of death, but with a very high incidence of sickness on the frontier this seems the most likely cause.



Cap Badge

Why was he a Private and not a Trooper? Originally a full cavalry regiment with 'Troopers', in 1746 , the regiment was reclassified as mounted infantry and members of the 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards became Privates.

What of his Plume? Never have I fully discovered its fate but in one of my mothers infamous 'clear outs' and ironically whilst I was doing my national service it 'disappeared'.



But Google has found it for you John !

Burnt Records

By the end of the war in 1918, more than seven million men and women had seen service in the British army. Unfortunately, more than half of their service records were destroyed in September 1940, when a German bombing raid struck the War Office repository in Arnside Street, London. However, an estimated 2.8 million service records survived the bombing or were reconstructed from the records of the Ministry of Pensions. This means that there is a roughly 40% chance of finding the service record of a soldier who was discharged at some time between 1914 and 1920.

The service records that survived the Arnside Street fire - the so-called 'Burnt Documents' - are too delicate to be handled due to fire and water damage, and are consequently only available to the public on microfilm.

Microfilming the 'Burnt Documents' has been a huge project, for which The National Archives has received valuable financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The microfilm catalogues, which are mostly arranged alphabetically by surname, cover soldiers who completed their service, for whatever reason, between 1914 and 1920.

With acknowledgement to the National Archive website from which the above is produced by the editor.

Miscellany

April 1916 News Items

- 1st New Zealand pilot brings down a Zeppelin
- 8th Military Medal introduced
- 12th Planned tax on rail tickets dropped
- 14th Cash pledged for diagnosis and treatment of venereal diseases
- 14th Allies bomb Constantinople
- 19th After a 143 days siege at Kut in Mesopotamia 9th(Poona) Division surrenders to the Turks.
- 25th Irish rebels stage an uprising in Dublin
- 25th First ANZAC Day marking the Gallipoli landing a year ago



A girl munition worker charged at with stealing a quantity of high explosive explained that she took it to cure a corn.

'You know you are getting old when the candles cost more than the cake'

Bob Hope

Continued from page 2

fewer than in previous years (over 70 five years ago). Those who did not go missed an excellent meal followed by dancing to the tunes and songs from entertainer Lesley ann. Here are some photos.



Lesley ann singing got people on their

Chairman, John Morley gives Joan a whirl

Pat and Carene at table

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

3 MAY

**MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON**

Supreme of chicken w tomato sauce,
Shoulder of lamb with red wine gravy,
Field mushroom with spinach and
poached egg, Cod loin w sweet potato
& leek risotto
Fruity roulade with fresh cream,
Crème brulee with shortbread biscuit,
Chocolate cheesecake with ice cream.

Tea or coffee & Mint

£9.25 - Pay on the day

To book, contact Kathie Morley,
email 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

Legion News

Information Day 19th March

Our Chairman and Secretary were with 28 members of Committees of other county branches for an all day meeting, with RBL East Midlands Area Manager, Mrs Linda Flecknell and her team. John Standish, Acting County Chairman, in opening the meeting warned that the County would be lost if more volunteers did not come forward for the Executive in particular and if branches did not submit accounts and MSIs on time.

The agenda included Area Overview and Services, Branch Welfare Project, Office 365 and County Handbook. Much detailed information on these topics was given to those from the branches such as renaming Welfare, Welfare Support at Legion level but Branch Community Support at branch level. Action that had been taken on some concerns that had been raised about the new systems was mentioned but the amount of information passed up to Area level at the meeting was limited.

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 16 RNA coffee morning at
Apr Theatre
- 21 Queen's birthday Beacon
Apr Lighting at MH Football Club
1730 for 1930 hrs
- 25 ANZAC Day @ Victoria
Apr Park, Leicester 7.30 am
- 11 RNA trip to Peterborough
May Greyhound racing - see p6
- 11 Branch meeting + talk
May
- 7 Jun Tri-service Lunch @ The
Angel
- 16 jun RNA Cheese & Wine 7pm
Great Bowden village hall
- 18 Jun AF Day Coffee Morning

Welfare

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

RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week on 0808 802 8080 for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

In Touch Next Month

'They Gave Their Today', Miscellany, Remember This?, News, etc.

Branch Contacts

Chairman

Rev. John Morley 01858 419714
revjmorley@talktalk.net

Vice Chairman

Janet Lee 077709 59845
janetlee39@ymail.com

Secretary, Welfare & Youth Betty
Ramsay 01858 434923
betty.ramsay@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer & Membership Secretary
Myra Grewcock 01858 419517
m.grewcock47@gmail.com
8 Holdenby Close, MH. LE16 8JE

Poppy Appeal

Dave Prior 01858 540431
Office - 6 Fairfield Road MH LE16 9QQ
01858433492
paoteam.rbl@btinternet.com

Standard Bearer

Hilary Brazil c/o 01858 434923

Monthly Lunches

Kathie Morley 01858 419714
kathiemorley@talktalk.net

In Touch - Editor

Tom Ashmore 01858 433108
tashmore@ukvet.net
9 The Pastures, MH . LE16 9EA

Branch Website

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Market Harborough Branch. The editor reserves the right to decide what is to be published and to edit material submitted. No part may be reproduced without prior permission.

The newsletter is online at

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough/newsletter