

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 210270



LIVE ON

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



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1916



Royal Canadian
Legion Badge
see page 4

Next Branch Meeting
7.30 pm **Thursday 15 December**
Committee 8 December

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Issue 218
November 2016

Branch News

October Branch Meeting

The brief session preceding the AGM included that the branch had been represented at the meetings of the Cottage Hospital Portico Project; reminders about the Coffee Morning, Poppy Appeal Launch, De Montfort Festival of Remembrance, 11-11-11 event on The Square, Remembrance Sunday Parade and Services and the Band Concert; that the new County Chairman hoped to revise Branch Groups; the Légion d'Honneur presentation; difficulties in arranging a Poppy Appeal stall in the Market Hall; the Standard had been at the Battle of Britain Service; In Touch was ready for distribution.

Annual General Meeting

This was poorly attended with only 27 members present although there 10 apologies for absence. One of these was from the President, Andrew Granger whose written report was attached with the Agenda Reports. The Chairman expressed his appreciation of Mr Granger's three years service. In his report Rev. Morley spoke of the Somme commemoration event, the Group concerned with the re-siting of the Cottage Hospital Portico, his appreciation of the work of the Secretary, Treasurer and Committee

and on a personal level of the privilege of being Branch Chairman and thanked everyone for their support during the last three years.

The Treasurer gave her report and presented the Annual Accounts for the year ending 30th June. Other reports circulated with the Agenda were Membership which mentioned the difficulty following the HQ changes of knowing how many members were in the Branch. The average attendance at meetings was 30; Welfare (now known as Community Support) in which Betty Ramsay is a 'Volunteer'. Youth reports active involvement with Scouts, ACF and ATC but problems with St John Cadets. Extracts from impressive speech by National Youth Standard Bearer at TRBL Conference quoted; Poppy Appeal total down on last year due to bad weather and lack of collectors but substantial amounts from donations and fund raising; Social events included the Anniversary Dinner which was poorly attended but monthly lunches were popular. Coffee mornings and the Band Concert were arranged as was the visit to the De Montfort Festival of Remembrance.; The Standard Bearer had a busy year at 7 out of town and 7 local events. A new President will be appointed after the next Branch Committee meeting but Existing Vice-Presidents were confirmed.

Cover Picture

The Royal Canadian Legion Badge copied from Wikipedia.

A Happy Reunion

It was a pleasant surprise for Tom Ashmore, but for Bernard Halsall it became a wonderfully nostalgic and emotional experience. The surprise was an e-mail Tom received from a gentleman named Leo Bral in Bruges, who had found our Branch web site on the internet.

Leo was anxious to contact Bernard for information about the forced landing of a General Aircraft Hamilcar Glider at Zomergen, a village near

was made and in October, accompanied by his wife Con, Bernard returned to Zomergen after nearly sixty years.

Bernard was given a very warm welcome from villagers, some of whom had watched him make the crash landing. It was on the third Arnhem lift during Operation Market Garden that the tow-rope on Bernard's glider had broken. He had had less than a minute to make a choice of landing site, and he was delighted to meet the farmer whose field he selected.



Ghent, in 1944. "I happened to witness this incident", he wrote. "I was six years old at the time and I watched how it landed safely in front of our house, where it remained for some time." After much research, he learned from a book entitled 'Tugs and Gliders to Arnhem' that the glider pilot was Captain Halsall. Contact

"They were just so pleased to see me," said Bernard, "I was delighted with the whole reunion".

Leo Bral, who, of course, was delighted to have been able to arrange the meeting after so many years research, presented him with a piece of the Hamilcar glider. Bernard also received a blue delftware plate engraved with five local villages.

**VETERAN
POPPY
SELLER
REVEALS
SECRET
HAREM**



The Editor of *In Touch* returns to his old haunts at Travelsphere. It's a hard life for an old chap.

See *Stop Press* on page 8

A Canadian Connection

Following the contact made by a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Peter Wolfendale, reported in in the July issue and his and his wife's visit described in the September issue, we have received a long email from Peter about where he lives and the Branch of RCL of which he is a member.

He says of Aurora "we are about 30 miles out of Toronto and it still has a small town feel. (*In fact is population is well over twice that of Market Harbourgh*) We live very close to the centre so can walk to all the shops, church, library etc. The Legion branch used to be in the residential area but it moved to larger premises in the 1970's into a remoter part of town



that is now industrial. It was built to accommodate the then much larger membership and is now probably too big for current members so that the ongoing expense is a drain on finances. (*In TRBL this would be called a Club many of which have had financial problems causing some to close*).

We have a large banquet hall that can

be rented out but it doesn't get used as much as it should. The banquet hall is kept separate from the main building so that it can be used for wedding receptions etc without interfering with members.



At the rear of the building is a Patio and inside there are a bar, lounges and a games room with Billiard/snooker tables. Darts is still very popular we have 8 boards in one room. I play in the Wednesday the social night. Tuesday night is more competitive against other pubs and legions. There is also a Monday night group that like playing with teams that play 701 all night."

But there are branch meetings, the General being on 3rd Tuesday of the month and the committee (they call it



the Executive) a week previously. They do not produce a monthly newsletter but 'Legion Letter' Volume 7, Issue 1 of which Peter sent a copy, was produced in the Spring this year. It had reports rather like those included with the agenda of our AGM. These show that there is much more activity than darts and snooker! 'From the President', whose head and shoulders photo is shown is on page 1. His upbeat message shows that the Branch is improving its financial position due to concerts, parties and prize draws. More members have also joined. He says, "We've been reinventing ourselves for the past two years.these changes have not been easy".

Reports included Veteran Services (equivalent to our Welfare) with a reminder to report anyone in need.

Poppy Chairman thanked local residents for the \$47,326 raised and mentions what this goes to support.

Membership now 659 (four times our Branch numbers) including 30 new members some from 'the early bird drive' (recruiting effort).

Ways and Means (fund raising) use tombola stalls, prize draws, etc. for which they need donations.

Youth Education Submissions have been received from local schools for the Annual RCL poster and Literary Competition.

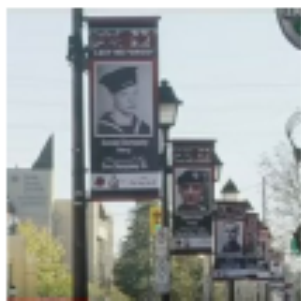
Ladies Auxilliary (Like the RBL Women's Section they are involved in many support activities e.g. at Branch events).

Seniors' Club for the over 55s of Branch and Ladies Auxilliary 'is a very socially active group' with a wide range of events. (No equivalent in our Branch).

Colour Party a small Ceremonial group of Standard Bearers carrying several Canadian relevant Colours Property 'we keep our club fresh and up to date'.

The Legion Supports the Army and Air Cadets with use of Branch facilities and they 'help with the Poppy Campaign' and other events.

Peter comments that all this activity is down to a hard core of dedicated volunteers but the majority of members do not get involved and Branch meetings (held in the Banquet hall) are very poorly attended. The Remembrance Day (11th November) is well supported and volunteers collect for the Poppy appeal outside supermarkets and, like M H, shops have poppies and tins on their counters. Recently there was an



enterprising way of reminding the public about Remembrance with these banners hung on

lamp-posts each with name and picture of a war casualty. (Thanks Peter for this shot from the TV video)

From the Archives

Poppy Day 1934

POPPY day this year was distinguished by fairly continuous rain, and on Friday when the sellers came for their trays of poppies it was raining hard. However, 50 ladies arrived undaunted by the deluge and a good many were out early on Saturday morning and brought in heavy tins. The street collection resulted in the splendid sum of over £114. With the additional amount collected by shops, schools, hotels, clubs and garages, the town collection is over £153, only a few pounds short than last year. Up to date £203 has been received and some church collections have yet to be sent in. This sum includes the village collections of £28 13s. 10d., And £14 11s. 6d. from the sale of wreaths. These figures compare very favourably with the sum of £213 sent up last year, and we shall not be very far behind that sum this year. The committee and organisers thank all who sold poppies and helped in several other ways to make Poppy Day so successful.

To put these figures into perspective, inflation over the last 80 years has resulted in £1 in 1934 being worth only 2p today. Thus the Street Collection of £114 was the equivalent of £5600 today. (How will that amount compare with this year's?). It should also be remembered that slow recovery from the Great Depression still left many unemployed.

Miscellany

November 1916 News Items

- 2nd Germans abandon Verdun
- 7th First woman of US Congress, elected
- 8th Nigerian property owned by enemy citizens to be sold
- 11th US President Wilson re-elected narrowly beating Republican opponent
- 14th 3.2 million British women now employed outside the home
- 15th A Food Controller appointed to regulate food consumption
- 28th Somme dead to date; Allies 500,000, German 650,000
- 29th Government to control vacant agricultural land for food production

The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference.
A dentist and a manicurist fought tooth and nail
A backward poet writes inverse
from [www. Guy-sports.com](http://www.Guy-sports.com)



Continued from p 2

The election of a new Chairman saw John Standish take over from Rev. John Morley. The new Vice-Chairman elected was Stuart Harrison. Branch Secretary and Treasurer were both re-elected as were members of the Committee. Conference delegates agreed were John Standish, National and Brian Thomas, County.

To end the meeting the new Chairman spoke of his objective to continue the excellent work of John Morley and his hope that the support from members would remain. He would work with the new HDC Armed Forces Champion and the hospital Portico Project.

Poppy Appeal Launch

There was a good gathering of the public, a contingent from the Legion Riders Branch as well as RNA and Branch members. The Northampton



Pipes and Drums Band marched to The Square with the Cadet and Scout standard bearers before the HDC Chairman officially launched the 2016 Poppy Appeal. The stirring music continued as the Cadets with their



decorated Poppy Trolleys set off to shops and businesses in the town centre.

Coffee Morning

The event on 15 October was well attended and supported by ATC, ACF and Sea Cadets manning stalls and making and serving coffee and biscuits. Branch members were on duty too from before opening time until after the raffle prizes had been won and the Theatre lounge cleared. Thanks are due to all who helped to produce £240 for the Poppy Appeal.

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

That was certainly true of the lunch and the 29 people present on 1st November.

The next gathering of what John Morley calls the 'Branch Luncheon Club' will be on 3rd January

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 13 Nov Remembrance Sunday
19 Nov Band Concert @ Baptist Church 7.30pm
15 Dec Branch meeting + Quiz
3 Jan Branch lunch
7 Feb Lunch with RAFA &RNA

Welfare

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

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 depend-

Stop Press

Con Halsall left M H on 28th October to live nearer to her daughter. Her new address is Egerton Lodge Residential Home, Wilton Rd, Melton Mowbray LE13 0UJ

A greetings card was signed by those at the branch lunch on 1st November George Seward died peacefully early on Sunday morning, 30th October

In Touch Next Month

'In Touch Christmas'. Remember This?, News, etc.

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