

# In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

## The Royal British Legion



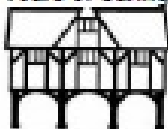
Registered Charity No. 219279

**LIVE ON**

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

**94**

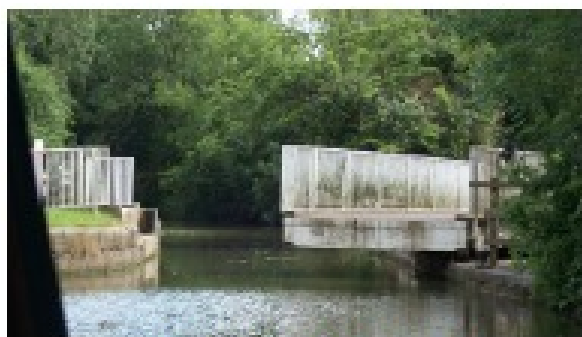
Years of Caring



**Market  
Harborough  
Branch**

Founded in 1923

**Centenary Year of 1917**



The location of this is in  
the heading on p4

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**

**7.30 pm Wednesday 10 May**

**Committee 4 May**

Function Room, Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Issue 223  
April 2017

## Branch News

There was no normal branch meeting in March but instead there was this year's Anniversary Dinner held at the Conservative Club on 8th March..

Following the singing of the National Anthem and Grace said by Rev John Morley dinner was served. After the meal Vice Chairman, Stewart Harrison, proposed the Loyal Toast and when coffee was served



Chairman, John Standish spoke 'a few words' in which he said that although this was not a Branch meeting

with its usual Act of Homage he still wanted to offer the Branch condolences to Tom Ashmore and his family following the death of Joan.

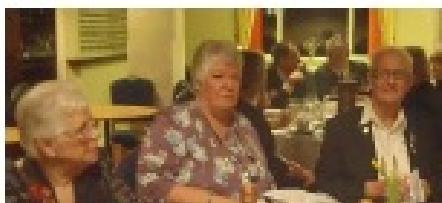
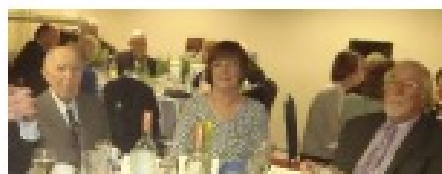
John welcomed Harborough District Council Chairman, Janet Ackerley, the Council Armed Forces Champion, Mike Rook. Branch members and friends. He ended his short address by thanking all those who had arranged and provided this Anniversary Dinner.

Cllr Ackerley proposed a Toast to the Royal British Legion mentioning her



long membership of the RBL Women's Section. A Toast to the Armed Forces was proposed by Cllr Rook.

The excellent dinner followed by entertainment by the Dolce singers was enjoyed by the 51 people present some of whom are in these photos taken by Christopher Brazil



Cover Image

A photo of the swing bridge over the canal at Foxton taken from a Day Boat by Tom Ashmore on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013

## A Letter from Sunny Spain

Our roving reporter Tom Ashmore, passed on this letter he received from a lady he met on his Internet tour of Royal British Legion branches around the world.

What a nice surprise to receive your communication. My name is Zena Stockwell and I am the secretary of the Benalmadena Branch, and have been for 10 years now. We started 17 years ago and were the first branch in Spain, therefore we called ourselves the Costa del Sol Branch. Over the years other branches opened so we have had to change our name to the Benalmadena to avoid confusion. There are now 12 branches in Spain South.

We are a small branch, 152 members, but in the past we were 400 plus, but it was inevitable that with more Branches opening members would

transfer nearer to home. Also in this area there are so many social clubs and clubs catering for every possible interest, line dancing, photography, choral, political, theatre, walking, bridge, animals, religious, so many I could go on and on. There is really no need for anyone who lives on their own to feel lonely here.



We did publish a monthly newsletter years ago, but unfortunately the two men who used to write this died, and as with so many clubs and organisations, it is not easy to find someone to take their place, especially as we all seem to be in the older age group.

Our Branch has been fortunate in that we have been able to take a lease on our own premises, and we are the only branch in Spain to do so. Before that we had to rely on the goodwill of

bars to let us use their premises, and at times we did feel like nomads, continually moving on. We have a Branch meeting on the last Monday of the

month, and a social get-together every Monday, except for July and August, when it's just too hot! So many members go back to the UK during this time, and those of us who stay are glad to not have commitments.

This month we had our branch meeting on the 24th as usual, followed by a bangers and mash lunch,

*Continued on p6*

## *Edward French of Foxton*

Great-grandfather of David French who provided the text from pages 39 and 40 of an unknown document

There were two public houses, the one by the canal bridge was kept by Mr. Monk, who, on his death left a considerable sum in trust for Foxton, the other kept by Mr. Goodridge was also the post office.



Present Day Black Horse. Was this where one of the 1860s pubs was?

One memorable character in Foxton was a man named French, an old soldier. When in his cups, in which he could seldom indulge by reason of poverty, he used to describe how in the Indian Mutiny he could never be satisfied that he hit anybody when firing his rifle and that in order to fulfil his ambition before leaving for England he found a dead black, set him up against the wall and fired at him. The boys of the village used to tease him, running after him shouting "Who shot the dead black". Another of his

boasts was that he was the only man in Foxton who had seen his own 'guts'. The occasion of this experience, of which he was so proud, was also in India where he had undergone an operation.

An extract from the Market Harborough Advertiser, which gives information of poor old Edward French, reads

"One used to read how in bygone days England used to treat its old soldiers, and the following is perfectly true, when the Crimean War broke out in 1854 there was a rush to enlist. A Foxton young man, Edward French, enlisted, but he was sent to India instead of Russia, and was in all the later fighting and battles that followed the terrible massacre of Cawnpore and the Indian Mutiny. French was with Sir Henry Havelock at the relief of Lucknow, and served with the English Army till the Mutiny was successfully put down. He continued in India till 1863, when he was sent home owing to ill health. He was discharged from the Army and was paid the sum of £10 in full and final settlement of any claims against the English War Office. French later got married, but constant ill health led him to be

often out of work. At this time Mr. John Watson set him to work on his farms and he lived in a cottage of Mr. Watson's at a rent of 1/- per week. This was a good house with a large garden. But French's illness still attacked him at different times in the year and it is said that it was a tropical disease brought back from India and he and his family were very badly off even at times for food.

He had a little parish relief and the village people were very kind to him. His wife sold his Mutiny medal for 2/6 to a Harborough jeweller to buy food. This is perfectly true and after constant attacks of illness poor French died in 1879. It was said in the village that Mrs. Spriggs and Miss Florrie Watson paid for the coffin furniture, as it was a parish funeral and these were not usually allowed.

Foxton has in its long history produced many worthy men, but none more than this gallant soldier finished up with a pauper's grave. Some remarkable incidents followed, in which Mr John Watson made his influence felt. At that time cash payments were not legal, only on a very low scale. An adult could not have more than 3/6 per week out of relief with the alternative of Harborough Workhouse.

The Guardians wanted Mrs. French to go with her three young boys into the Harborough Workhouse. Mrs. Haddon, of Lubenham Lodge, took

the oldest girl aged 13 to live with her and train her for service. Mr Watson strongly protested against the Guardians not giving Mrs. French the relief and threatened to get Mr. J. Paget, at that time M. P. for the



**Workhouse**

Harborough Division, to bring the matter up in the House of Commons. The Guardians then gave way and they allowed Mrs. French 3/6 each for her three boys, and paid the school fees (6d.) and 1/- for the weekly rent, though it is said Mr. Watson never took the rent, but always returned it and had done so for a number of years.

### Legion Policy on Northern Ireland Legacy Investigations.

In a letter to Chairmen. The National Chairman states that the Legion cannot comment or provide legal representation in individual cases although it can provide assistance and advice, except legal advice to members of the Armed Forces Community affected by the Investigations.

Similarly, in the planned protest parades, although individual Legion members may take part, they must not do so in the name of the Legion.

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typically English to celebrate St. Georges Day. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

I am a Londoner, but during the war I was evacuated to Leicester for a while (showing my age) and I was billeted in Leicester itself, but I do remember going weekends to a place called Smeeton Westerby to the parents of the lady I was billeted with. Apart from that I do not know your part of the country.

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### March Funerals

Market Harborough character Mervyn Silver was well known to many Branch members, a few of whom were at his Service on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, following the private cremation of Joan Ashmore, 18 of her branch colleagues joined other friends at a 'Remember Joan' buffet lunch at the Angel Hotel.

A few fellow branch members of Treasurer, Myra Grewcock were at the funeral service on the 30<sup>th</sup> of her mother, Ivy Thorald, widow of the late Bert.

**Poppy Call**, the RBL handy-man service for the ex-service community is now available free of charge and without means test for those over 70. If you require help with little jobs around the house call 0800 032 0306

## Miscellany

### April 1917 News Items

- 4<sup>th</sup> Mutiny breaks out in sections of French Army
- 6<sup>th</sup> America is at war when President Woodrow Wilson signs the Declaration
- 7<sup>th</sup> US to send 10,000 army engineers to France
- 13<sup>th</sup> London bus drivers go on strike
- 15<sup>th</sup> US Select Service Act calls for drafting of all men aged 21-30
- 16<sup>th</sup> Len returns to Russia from Switzerland across Germany in a sealed train
- 26<sup>th</sup> German planes kill 76 civilians in a bombing raid on the South coast



### From RN & Marines Fitness Reports

This young lady has delusions of adequacy  
He has the wisdom of youth and the energy of old age  
His men would follow him anywhere but only out of curiosity

## From the Archives

**Welland Park Memorial**  
A Ceremony to Unveil and Bless  
the newly installed memorial  
was held on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1996



After Our Standard Bearers, George Fleming and John Cox and those of invited RBL branches had assembled, Deputy Lieutenant, Robin Murray-Phillipson, unveiled the memorial which was then Blessed by Rev. Grenville-Gibbins. Rev. C. Moody gave an address and led prayers before Branch secretary, Andrew Marriott laid a wreath and the Last Post was sounded. The service ended with the Act of Homage and a two minutes silence.

The inscription on the plaque on the memorial stone reads:  
*This stone was laid by the Market  
Harborough Branch of the  
Royal British Legion in memory  
of all who gave their lives in the  
fight for freedom over the years  
This ground was consecrated  
on August 19<sup>th</sup> 1995 after the  
50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE & VJ Days*

Continued from p2

## Peaker Park

In an attempt to resume the support of Branch members, three of us booked for Mothers' Day lunch but it was cancelled. Future events include:

26 May BBQ night with entertainment starting at 4.00 pm

16 June Sunday lunch convery & BBQ with afternoon entertainment

8 July Peaker Park Garden Party 12noon

9 Aug Music Evening in the Garden at 5 pm with light evening buffet

15 Sep Fine Dining evening & entertainment

Please let Secretary or Editor know 2 days before when you wish to go.

## LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

**2 MAY**

**MEET IN THE  
BAR AT NOON**

## MENU

Chicken Supreme on mash; Leg of  
Lamb on dauphinoise potatoes;  
baked cod loin on mash.  
Fresh fruit salad & sorbet; Bread &  
Butter pudding & custard; Lemon  
Tart & berries & ice cream.  
Tea or Coffee & mints. £9.25

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

- 16 Apr Peaker Park Easter Sunday buffet carvery lunch 12 noon + entertainment
- 25 Apr RBL Advice & Info 'Pop In' @ M H Library 10 am-12
- 10 May RNA-Peterborough Dog racing & Dinner 6pm £18
- 10 May Branch meeting + talk
- 26 May Peaker Park BBQ 4 pm with entertainment
- 24 Jun Armed Forces Day @ Leics Cathedral
- 24 Jun RNA Cheese & Wine
- 25 Jun MH Armed Forces Day
- 5 Sep RNA Trip to Arboretum
- 14 Oct Poppy Appeal Coffee morn'g

### Welfare

If you are aware of any one who 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 0800 802 8080 for advice and support for serving & ex-service people and dependents.

### In Touch Next Month

'Undeclared War', 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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