

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

Issue 228
September 2017

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279



LIVE ON

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



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1917



Light
Infantry
Cap
Badge
see p 4

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm **Wednesday 11 October (AGM)**
Committee 5 October

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Branch News

August Branch Meeting

The Chairman welcomed Members (of whom only 20 were present) and a potential new member, John Minshell. In the absence of the Secretary, the minutes were taken by the Treasurer who reported that the District Council might not buy the Cottage Hospital site and that plans for moving the Memorial Portico had been submitted; volunteers were needed to help with measuring for the new locations of the Garden of Remembrance crosses prior to their refurbishment; this year the Remembrance Band Concert will be held at the Welland Park Assembly Rooms on Sunday at 2.30 pm; for transport to the de Montfort Festival of Remembrance contact John Morley; the Portacabin has been cleared and archive material is now at the county Records Office; a Poppy Walk round Welland Park had been arranged for 20 August; the annual Leicester City Football match with Poppy Appeal Collection and parade of veterans would be on 18 November; RAFA hoped for Branch support at the Battle of Britain Service (see p8); volunteers for the September poetry reading were sought (and obtained); Branch Annual Accounts had been completed and audited; Social & In Touch Team reports were given.

After Meeting Talk

Jackie McBlain spoke about the proposal for LOROS to establish a 'Wellbeing Centre' in Market Harborough similar to the one in Leicester where they provide free, high-quality, compassionate care and support to terminally ill adult patients, their family and carers with counselling, spiritual support, alternative therapies, social engagement or just a place to meet up for some help and advice. Jackie sought our views and ideas.

September Lunch

Far fewer this month with just 16 people present to enjoy the meal.

Peaker Park

Their 'Fine Dining' evening is on 17 September, Harvest Festival Lunch at 1pm on 11 October and Bonfire Night at 6pm on 3 November. If you wish to attend any of these please ring them on MH 414460..

Committee Members

Brian & Janet Lee (077709 59845)
Colin & Pauline McIntyre (email
cMcIntyre1945@yahoo.co.uk)
Pat Middleton (MH 445827)
Kathie Morley (MH 419714)
Barbara Pickup (MH 433492)
Brian Thomas (MH 431119)
Pat Walker (MH 545560)

Cover Image

Found on the Internet with images of individual Light Infantry units.

Remember This? (From September 2002)

A Remarkable Story

Flight Sergeant Nicholas Alkemade was 21 years old and a rear gunner on his 13th bombing mission, on this occasion to Frankfurt, on 24th March, 1944.

The rear gunner in a Lancaster bomber sat in a perspex bubble with so little room that even his parachute has to be stowed in the fuselage behind him.

After the bombing run had been completed and the pilot turned for home the plane came under attack from a Junkers 88 which caused an explosion and a fire in the Lancaster.

Ft. Sgt. Alkemade did manage to shoot down the enemy plane before he realised he would have to bail out. But to his horror he discovered that he could not reach his parachute.

Faced with the prospect of being burned to death, he made the decision to jump from the plane as a more preferable death. He said that he felt so resigned and calm during his fall that he even calculated that falling from 18,000 feet to the ground would take about 90 seconds – then he passed out.

He awoke to see stars shining through the trees and was amazed to realise he was still alive; he had a twisted knee and some bruising. It was apparent that the trees had bro-

ken his fall and a fall of fresh snow some 18 inches deep made a final softer landing.

The local Volksturm arrested him. He was taken to hospital and then to Dulag Luft P.O.W camp, where nobody would believe his story and he was treated as a spy.

A Lieutenant of the Luftwaffe examined the wreck of a Lancaster which was found not far from where Ft. Sgt. Alkemade was found and discovered a badly burned parachute, with the lift webbings still tied down near the rear of the plane. The evidence supported his story and the camp commandant stated that the sergeant's survival was a miracle.

But Nicholas Alkemade's story of a gifted life did not end there.

After the war he went to work at a chemical factory in Loughborough, where a 224 lb. girder fell on his head. He was pulled out from underneath it for dead – but he walked away with just a bruised scalp! On another occasion he was drenched with sulphuric acid. He then had an electric shock which threw him into a hole in which he lay breathing in chlorine gas for a quarter of an hour – and again walked away.

Do you believe in Guardian Angels?

A Strange Tale

by David Reed

My son Ian is now 32 years old and this occurrence happened for the first time when he was about seven or eight. He was in his bedroom early one November evening playing on the floor with his train set. My daughter Caroline who was about eighteen at the time was sitting at her dressing table in her bedroom. Both bedrooms doors were standing open.

Ian looked up from his train set to see a man standing on the step into his bedroom looking at him. Ian was startled but at that point was not actually frightened, thinking that one of the family was with him. The man smiled, turned on the step and walked out of the door. Ian ran through to Caroline's room saying, "Did you see that man?" Caroline laughed and said, "Of course I did. It was Dad". Ian said, "No it wasn't. Dad's up the garden sawing wood."

Both children came running downstairs to their mother who was in the kitchen. Janet called me from outside and I came in and searched the house but of course nobody was there. After a while things got back to normal.

It was about a month later that I asked Ian what the man was wearing. He said it was an old fashioned uniform of a

soldier with two rows of buttons on his tunic. This caused my wife and I to sit up and take notice.

At this point another tale starts.

In April 1840 a Captain De Vere Caldwell was staying in Little Bowden with his relative a Mrs. Hannah Brown who we know lived in this house because her name is on the old deeds. The Captain had ridden out to Brixworth to visit friends and on the way had stopped off at Lamport Hall to attend a party. Having had a little too much to drink he climbed up one of the stone gate pillars on each of which sits a swan made of cast iron.



The swan broke off and the captain fell, the beak going through his chest. He was put in a carriage and brought to Little Bowden where the nearest doctor lived. He died during the night. His grave is in Little Bowden Church yard.

Ian has "seen" the "Captain" on about three occasions over the years and has recently become quite interested in him. He rang Army Records in London to ask for any information on him and was told that he died in Ceylon and was buried there in a military cemetery. My son told them he was in Little Bowden Churchyard. After a



minute or two of "Oh, No he isn't", "Oh, Yes he is", the conversation ended in stalemate.

The question is why is he not buried at the family home which is in Norfolk and why have the Army got it wrong?

Our house is very old and appears on a map dated 1698, the oldest we can find.

David Reed wrote this story for In Touch at the request of his friend, our Tur Langton member, the late Jack Stimpson who added the following Postscript.

Ian was watching TV one night (he was then a teenager) and David and Janet went to bed. Some time later David awoke and saw the downstairs light was still on so got up and went

downstairs. He found Ian in the kitchen sitting on a chair to watch TV with a small Jack Russell terrier on his lap. He looked very frightened and David said "What's wrong?". Ian said he had gone upstairs to bed and found the same man standing in the same spot at which point he fled downstairs and switched on all the lights and that is as David found him.

Over the years David and Janet have had three dogs none of which would go upstairs without someone being with them and in front going up and behind them coming down.

The tombstone in Little Bowden Churchyard carries the inscription, "Captain De Vere Caldwell, Regiment of Light Infantry, died 8th April, 1840".

The Northampton Mercury of 18th April, 1840, reported "Captain Caldwell, a nephew of Sir Justinian Isham, expired at the residence of Mr. Brown of Little Bowden, on Wednesday week. Captain Caldwell obtained his commission only in February last"

The editor comments

Looking at the swans it seems more



likely that a sharp ended wing not the beck that pierced the chest of the 'Captain'.

It was 1840, so could his baronet uncle have helped him reach that rank since February?

Legion News

Women at War 100

More than 1,000 women attended The Royal British Legion event at the National Memorial Arboretum on 7 July, celebrating 100 years of women in the military. Previous members of the WRAC, WRNS (Wrens) and WRAF were present and an all women tri-service band played at a drum-head service.

Pedal to Paris

This year's annual cycle ride was from 31 August to 4 September culminating in a moving ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe followed by a celebration dinner at a Paris hotel.

County Office

Lisa Michael, the new Membership Support Officer, is at County Office in the VAL building at 9 Newarke St. Leicester on three days each week but in the Derby Office at other times.

Advice and Information

This service is available from RBL Help Line Call Centre (see p8) and locally, face to face, when County A & I Officer, Susan Grogan visits M H Library from 10am to noon on the last Tuesday of each month. Appointments can be made via the Call Centre.

Poppy Calls

This free Handy Man service helps ex-Service people and their families with small household repairs and minor adaptations. To use call 0800 032 0306.

Miscellany

September 1917 News Items

- 3rd German air raids kill 108 people on the Isle of Sheppey
- 7th Germans bomb Allied hospitals killing many Americans
- 11th 200,000 women estimated to work on the land in UK
- 15th China offers 300,000 soldiers to aid Allies on Western Front
- 17th Germans capture Riga only 350 miles from Russian capital, Petrograd
- 17th German government asks boys of 15 to join army
- 25th Argentina to cut ties to Germany after a spy scandal
- 26th Impressionist painter Edgar Degas dies aged 83

WWI Land Girl



Mother, I told you I was bringing Millicent down for the weekend

Poetry Funnies

Where do poems come from?

Answer: Poe-trees

What is the highest honour among Cowboy poets?

Answer: Poet lariat

From the Archives

Photographs of unknown origin of a Medallion commemorating the Centenary of the death of Admiral Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar



Inscriptions read "Presented by British and Foreign Sailors Society" (top); "Containing Victory Copper from Lords of the Admiralty" (bottom); "Death of Nelson October 1805 Centenary Memento October 1905" (on scroll) above "E.R. VII"



Inscriptions Read "England expects that every man will do his duty" (top); "Thank God I have done my duty" (bottom); "Victory Trafalgar Oct.21, 1805" (centre beneath the waves and ship)

More News

Local Sea Cadets TS Fernie have been raising funds to purchase a £3500 Trinity Rowing boat. The big prizes draw was on 12 September.

Front Line Walk. Susan Timms, daughter of Branch Member John, will be taking part in this October 2018, 100 Km event from Arras (where her Great grandfather was captured) to the Menin Gate and seeks sponsors.

Former Branch Member Fred Reed died after a short illness on 24 August aged 91. Condolences are sent to members of his family.

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

3 OCTOBER **MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON**

MENU

Roast Chicken & stuffing; Slow cooked pork on mash; Loin of cod on mash; Baked ½ aburgine filled with veg on fried potatoes.
Crème brûlée; Chocolate cheese-cake; Cherry & almond tart.
Tea or coffee & mints. £9.25

To book, contact Pat Middleton, email patriciamiddleton@hotmail.com or phone 01858 445827

To cancel, ring The Angel (01858 462702) before 10 am on the day or you will be charged

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 17 Sep Battle of Britain Service
10.45 Little Bowden Church
- 11 Oct Branch AGM, Buffet and
Poppy Awards
- 28 Oct Festival of Remembrance @
Demontfort Hall
- 28 Oct M H Poppy Appeal launch
- 11 Nov Armistice Day on the
Square from 1045 hrs
- 12 Nov Remembrance parade &
Service from 0915 hrs + on
The Square at 1045 hrs
- 26 Nov Remembrance Band Con-
cert 2.30pm Welland Park
Assembly Rooms
- 2 Dec RNA Coffee Morning
- 9 Dec Sea Cadets Coffee Morning

Welfare

If you are aware of any one who
may benefit from the Legion
welfare services ring **Betty**

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

From the Archives, Miscellany,
Remember This?, News, etc.

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

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Branch Website

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