

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

95

Years of Caring



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1918



Thomas was at Passchendale but not with these New Zealand Troops - see page 4

Next Monthly Branch Meeting

7.30 pm **Wednesday 9 May**

Committee **3 May**

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

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APRIL 2018

Branch News

95th Anniversary Dinner

held on 14th March instead of the normal Branch Meeting and at the Conservative Club. The arrangement made by Pat Middleton was for a semi-formal Dinner Dance with six tables for the 44 branch members and guests clear of a dance floor at the side of which the Dolce Sisters trio would



perform and provide music for dancing. With everyone seated, the Chairman read a letter received from HM the Queen in response to the message of loyal greeting the branch



had sent her. A verse of the National Anthem was sung, Grace was said by the President and the dinner was served.



Before coffee, the Loyal Toast was given by our Youth Member, Christopher Brazil and then the Chairman 'said a few words' welcoming those present and thanking all who had been involved in producing the event. He also explained that he and his wife Valerie were wearing their RAFVR uniforms to mark the centenary of the formation of the RAF to which he gave a Toast. A Toast to the Royal British Legion and our Branch was given by Tom Ashmore,



and followed by a Toast to the Armed Forces by Brian Thomas.

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Cover Image

Found on a website by John Cook during his research for his 'Tale of Two Grandfathers' on pages 4 & 5.

Remember these Anniversaries?



2002 at Bull's Head, Clipston



2005 at the Golf Club



**2006 at the Golf Club with
Sir Edward Garnier MP**

2007 at the Golf Club

Where our Guests of Honour from
Harborough District Council were
the Chairman, Councillor John Ford
and Mrs Ford, and the Chief Executive
Officer, Sue Smith and Mr Smith



2003 80th at Wellington Suite



**2004 at Golf Club with Lord
Lieutenant and trophies**



2008 85th at Golf Club



**2013 90th at
Golf Club
where Lord
lieutenant,
Lady
Greton is
asked to cut
the cake**

WW1 A Tale of Two Grandads

What would two men, one from South Elmsall, West Yorkshire, one from Yalding, Kent, have in common between 1914 and 1918? No prizes for guessing that both fought in WW1 but Marney and I recognized that there were a number of other factors that linked their circumstances. Both were mature in age at enlistment, both were married with families, both were placed in Infantry Regiments, and finally and most importantly both survived relatively unscathed.

Thomas Bradley, a coal miner by profession, enlisted in the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry aged 41 years.



Despite having wife three daughters and a son he enrolled at Pontefract on the 12th August 1914. His Army

Records did not survive the blitz but we have been able to deduce from his service number, enrolment date, and Medal Rolls that he served in the 6th Service Bn.

Richard William Henham, a farm bailiff, enlisted in the Royal Sussex Regiment on the 30th November 1915, three days short of his 40th year. He had a wife, five daughters and a son. His records survived the blitz, somewhat charred but legible. He had been placed in the 14th South Downs Bn but never served in it, after one day he was placed on the army reserve and sent home until recall on the 16th June 1916 when he was placed in the 12th Bn of the Hampshire Regiment. This points to him having been accepted within the Derby Scheme whereby some men could await mobilization on an as required basis.

Their wars were however very different. Thomas served on the Western Front from 21.5.15 to 19.2.18. with a total service time of 3years and 362days. The 6th Service Bn KOYLI fought with the 14th Light Division at Hooze, the Division was the first to come under attack from Flamethrowers. In 1916 on the Somme the 6th saw action in the battle for Delville Wood and the battle of Flers-Courcelette. In 1917 the first and third battle of the Scarpe

at Arras then the first and second battle of Passchendaele. Thomas survived all this without a scratch, as the saying goes, but was medically discharged in August 1918 having finally succumbed to the after effects of trench foot. He received the 15 Star,



War and Victory Medals (Pip, Squeak & Wilfred) together with the Silver War Badge which proved to the general public that discharged permanently injured or sick servicemen had "done their bit".

Richard ,as previously noted, was mobilized on 11.6.16 and by 16.11.16 was en route for Salonika where he disembarked on the 3.12.16. The army in this area were tasked to support the Serbians against the German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces. Soldiers there thought of themselves as the forgotten army and referred to the region as 'Muckydonia' in reference to its correct title Macedonia. As on the Western Front there was trench warfare but on a smaller scale, and Richard was

classified in the specialist role as a Company Bomber. This was a campaign marked by the very high incidence of casualties through sickness and disease rather than by direct enemy action, roughly in the proportion of twenty to one. Malaria, Dysentery and Enteric diseases were prevalent due to a terrain full of stagnant pools with blistering heat in the Summer and bitterly cold Winters. For the 12th apart from skirmishes their major battles were short and sharp at Horseshoe Hill in 1916, First & Second battles of Dorian in 1917, the Third battle of Dorian and the pursuit to Struma Valley in 1918. The Second battle of Dorian brought a casualty list more familiar on the Western Front. The Battalion were caught, on their way to the assembly point, in a narrow ravine which doubled the effectiveness of enemy shelling and they lost 15 Officers and 249 men before the remnants made it back. He like Thomas was reported to have made it home without a scratch though records show that he was admitted to Casualty Clearing Station 28 on the 20th August 1918 for a stay of fourteen days. Since no major action was reported around that date and as one category of CCS's role was, 'non-serious cases to be returned to duty after recuperation and rest', this for a maximum period of one month, it seems likely that he had succumbed to one of the readily available sicknesses. Richard was finally discharged on the 16th April

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1919 at Canterbury with entitlement to the War & Victory Medals.

Well how did they fare post war? Thomas returned to work in the mines. On the 1939 Register he is described as an Incapacitated Colliery Hewer aged 62 and living with his wife Mary also 62 yrs of age. Marney remembers him as a very quiet and mild mannered man who saw her every Sunday for a family lunch but only after his ritual visit to The United Services Club, known locally as 'The Soldiers', to get his weekly pre-lunch pint. She recalls that age and his disability involved very slow progress and dogged determination to reach his destination, some three hundred yards away. Thomas died in 1951 aged 74.

Richard died in 1938 aged 60. He gave up farm work, around the mid 1920's, on moving from Yalding to nearby Paddock Wood, to become a shop assistant in a local general store. My memories of him are fleeting, being just four at the time, but I do recall this loving and tolerant man smiling as he put up with me sliding up and down on the old brown leather chaise longue. In conclusion without any disrespect to the hundreds of thousands of young men who gave life and limb so bravely, it is a pleasure to also pay tribute to the more mature PBI.

We are both proud and privileged to have had these men as our Grandads.

Miscellany

April 1918 News Items

- 6th British and Japanese troops land at Vladivostok
- 14th Charlie Chaplin's film 'A Dog's Life' released
- 21st French encouraged to eat horse meat.
- 22nd German ace pilot shot down having destroyed 80 allied planes in 2 years
- 22nd UK budget raises taxes and ends Penny Post
- 23rd British forces raid submarine bases in Belgium
- 23rd Irish protest about conscription



**WW I
advert
gives an
idea of
inflation. A
packet of 20
now costs
nearly £9**

Just a bit of Fun

- What do you get when you pour hot water down a rabbit hole?
A hot cross bunny.
- What did the tree say to spring?
What a re-leaf
- If a pig loses its voice is it disgruntled?
- When cheese gets its picture taken what does it say?
- Why are a wise man and a wise guy opposites?

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During the evening raffle tickets had been sold and the Chairman was asked to draw the winning numbers.



Delayed by the very slow serving the singers were asked to start their performance before diners had finished their meals. Then, after a rather hesitant start, dancing got under way with some examples of excellent professional looking foot work but with all couples enjoying themselves.

The evening ended at about 11 o'clock.

Dinner at Kilworth Springs

On 29th March 1998 about a dozen members attended a dinner hosted by Husbands Bosworth Branch. In the very pleasant surroundings of the Golf Club we enjoyed an excellent meal followed by dancing. Our experts, Josie and Keith Bowley made those of us with two left feet envious of their skill but the floor was also used by others wanting to 'have a go'.

I was reminded of this occasion as I sat next to our guest, the Husbands Bosworth chairman sitting next to me. Editor

Branch members are always welcome at **Peaker Park** at their social events such as Afternoon Tea Dance at 2.30 on 8th May, BBQ & entertainment at 4pm on 25th May, Seaside Special Sunday Afternoon with fish & chips on 11th June, Garden Party 12.00 to 2.30 pm 14th July

Committee Members

Jill Mann (MH 461572)

Colin & Pauline McIntyre (email cMcIntyre1945@yahoo.co.uk)

Pat Middleton (MH 445827)

Kathie Morley (MH 419714)

Barbara Pickup (MH 433492)

Pat Walker (MH 545560)

**LUNCH
AT THE
ANGEL**



for good food and good company

1 MAY

**MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON**

MENU

Chicken Supreme on mash with sauce; Roast pork belly & roast potatoes; Baked cod loin on potatoes. Fresh fruit salad & sorbet; Chocolate torte, strawberries & ice cream; Cherry & almond tart & custard.

Tea or coffee & mints £9.25

To book, contact Kathie Morley on 01858 419714 or by email kathiemorley@talktalk.net

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 May RNA trip to Greyhound racing @ Peterborough
- 19/20 May TRBL Annual Conference @ Belfast
- 10 Jun Sponsored Walk in Welland (TBC) Park
- 23 Jun RNA Cheese & Wine @ Gt Bowden Village Hall
- 23 Jun Armed Forces Day Service & Parade @ Leicester
- 30 Jun Local Armed Forces Day event
- 8 Aug Great Pilgrimage 90th Anniversary

Welfare

If you know any one who may benefit from Legion welfare 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. Locally, visit the **Pop In Centre** at the Library 10am-noon on the second Thursday each month

In Touch Next Month

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

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Branch Contacts

President

V. Rev. John Morley 01858 419714
revjmorley @ talktalk.net

Chairman

John Standish 0116 2404170
Mobile 07710 799595
chairmhrbl@btinternet.com

5 Manor Rd, Fleckney, LE8 8TN

Vice Chairman

Stewart Harrison
srh30232@gmail.com

Secretary,

Sara Whitley-Kinzett 01858 434476
sarawhitleykinzett@gmail.com
4 Ashfield Road, M H LE16 7LX

Treasurer & Membership Sec'y

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 01858 433492
paoteam@btinternet.com

Standard Bearer

Hilary Brazil c/o 01858 434923

Monthly Lunches

Kathie Morley 01858 419714
kathiemorley@talktalk.net

Welfare & Youth

Betty Ramsay 01858 434923
betty.ramsay@hotmail.co.uk

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

Committee - see Page 7