

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 of Armistice



Did the recruit
on pages 4 & 5
wear one?

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 12 December
Committee 6 December

Issue 242
November 2018

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Branch News

October Branch Meeting

The meeting was led by Vice Chairman, Stewart Harrison who explained that John Standish had resigned as Chairman for 'personal reasons'. The 32 members present heard appeals for help in the Memorial Gardens & on the Poppy Appeal stall, Remembrance time and social events arrangements, that there were now 123 Members & Team reports. After a short break it was the

2018 Annual General Meeting

led by the Vice Chairman and at which the President, V. Rev John Morley gave his report mentioning highlights of the past year but because of his absence there was no Chairman's report. The Treasurer presented the Branch Annual accounts which were formally approved. Reports had been produced on Branch Community Support, Youth, Social activities, and Standard Bearer duties.

John Morley was formally re-appointed as President and the Vice Presidents confirmed. Members signified that Stewart Harrison be elected Branch Chairman, Jill Mann as Vice Chairman, Myra Grewcock remaining Treasurer and four Committee members. (See page 7) A motion for Annual Conference and delegates for that County were agreed.

A buffet with a wide and generous range of savoury and sweet eatables then followed.

Garden of Remembrance

Branch members were helped by Community Volunteers and Lion's



Club members in producing a layout of high standard. To mark the centenary of the end of WWI, a 'Silent Soldier' and commemorative bench were added.



Cascade of Poppies

An invitation was received from The Vicar of Great Bowdwn Church to the unveiling of knitted poppies hung on the Church tower. Children



had placed crosses on



the Green each with the name of a local WWI casualty

Cover Image

The badge of the RAF Recruit Training School at Swindon.
Image found on the Internet

Do you Remember 2008 Poppy Appeal Launch?

If you were out and about in the town centre on Saturday, 25 October, you may have been surprised to hear the sound of bagpipes wafting through the cold morning air. Maybe you made your way, like many others, we hope, to find the source of the sound. Having done so, you would have been



made aware that the 2008 Poppy Appeal had been well and truly launched in Harborough.

The occasion was the brainchild of our innovative new Appeal Organiser, Dave Pryor. He arranged for fellow members of the Northampton Pipe Band to join him in a musical send off intended to attract the attention of the local populace.

The bandsmen gave their services freely and travelled from Corby, Kettering and other local towns. Unfortunately, in the extremely cold conditions, their frozen fingers restricted the time they were able to play. (It must have been pretty chilly for those bare knees, too.)

Several Branch stalwarts, accompanied by cadets from the Air Training Corps and Army Cadet Force, then set off with decorated trolleys loaded with poppy trays and collecting tins

f o r
delivery to
t o w n
c e n t r e
s h o p s .

T h e
m e m b e r s
o f t h e
P i p e
B a n d ,
w e
t r u s t ,
w e r e

soon able to toast their knees before a cheery fire whilst centrally heating themselves with a hot cuppa, laced with the amber nectar from the home of the pipes and the kilt



**Bernard Halsall on his scooter
and the specially made trolleys**

The First Day

by David Leyland

The day had arrived 14th October 1974. I was just, by a few days, 17 years old and I was joining the Royal Air Force as an Engineering Apprentice, a "Brat" to those in the know.

A week earlier my travel warrant had arrived for a single journey to RAF Swinderby. When the taxi came to take me to Coventry train station there was a tear in my mum's eye and I am sure I saw a smile on my dad's face. I arrived at Newark station along with about forty youths aged 16 and 17. There was an old fashioned RAF grey bus from the 1940s already there waiting for us. We were met by a Corporal who very politely asked



"Would you gentlemen please get onto the bus" very polite I

thought!!!! Once inside we sat down on the wooden seats. The Corporal stood at the front of the bus. He closed the door with a crash and opened his mouth and out came a stream of language that would never had come out of my mother's mouth and am sure I did not know what half of the words meant. I think he was explaining to us that we were now in

the Royal Air Force and he would be "looking after" us from now on! What had I done!

The first stop was the camp barber who only did one style, a very short back and sides. My hair was down to



my shoulders and I'm sure it gave him great sadistic pleasure to remove it. Next stop was the NAAFI. The Corporal said we had 30 minutes to eat and be outside again and

God help us if we were late. The menu was Chicken or Steak and Kidney pie with chips or mash and the pudding was Semolina. I was not sure which was the mash or the Semolina but the women serving the food looked only slightly less scary than the corporal so I decided to play it safe and have the chips.

We were told to line up in three ranks. That started the next flow of

abuse as the Corporal did not think we could count to three. Off we went to the clothing store for a pair of denims, which I was sure in several years I would grow into, bedding, a beret, socks and a pair of boots. It all happened so fast I was mystified how they knew my size, they didn't!

Next stop was our 5 star barrack block or H block. We were told which one of four rooms we were in along with 19 others. We found a bed "pit space" and just sat there in shock. There was not much noise except from a Brummy from the Black Country who thought all his dreams had come true. Very strange.

The Corporal told us to be in one of the two upstairs rooms in the barrack block at 18:00 but my watch only went up to 12. One of the other lads said it was 6 o'clock. We were going to meet the Sergeant. The corporal warned us, "If you think I'm bad, wait till you see him!" I remember sitting on the edge of a bed being told that when the Sergeant entered the room we were to stand up as fast as we could. The door opened and this large red faced animal entered carrying a pickaxe handle. His beret was almost painted onto his head with the badge standing up at right angles to his eyebrow. He screamed at us for not being fast enough. Every time he hit the table with the pick axe handle we were to stand up and when he hit it again to sit down. This went on for about 30 minutes until he was satisfied we were doing it fast enough. We were told

that from that day onwards we would all shave and we were to go to the NAAFI shop and buy a razor, a can of Erasmic shaving foam, a can of Brasso, four yellow dusters, a can of Blanco and six coat hangers.

He then left the room. The Corporal



asked us, "Who has ironed a shirt before?" Nobody had. He said, "I expect mummy did it for you! Well I'M YOUR MUMMY NOW AND I'M NOT

GOING TO ***** DO IT FOR YOU!!". He then showed us how.

Time for bed. Lights out at 21:30 and reveille at 06:30. The atmosphere was very subdued. I got undressed and then into bed it was obvious that a couple of the lads had never undressed in front of others before as they tried to undress with their locker doors around them. I slept part of the night with the pillow over my head as some of the boys were crying, not good! Most of these lads never made it through basic training.

What a first day! I was shattered but at least I had learnt something from it, my vocabulary had been expanded.

Poppy Appeal Launch

Following the tradition established by Dave Pryor when he became Appeal organiser in 2008 (see page 3), the Northampton Pipe Band marched on



to The Square and played whilst



standard bearers, cadets and visitors, including several Branch members, waited until President V. Rev John Morley said 'a few words'. He thanked Dave for all he had achieved over the last 10 years and in recognition, presented him with a framed certificate. He then introduced HDC

Chairman Cllr Bowles who officially started this year's Appeal. To the sound of more music the cadets left with their own designed



trolleys to deliver Poppy kits to shops and businesses in the town centre.

Miscellany

November 1918 News Items

- 3rd Austria signs an armistice with the Allies
- 9th Kaiser abdicates. Germany becomes a republic
- 11th Victory! Germany surrenders. Their delegation led by a politician & 2 minor generals accept the allies harsh terms and sign an Armistice. Hostilities to cease at 11 am
- 12th New UK War loan of £700 million. War debt now £7,100 millions
- 15th Reports of jubilation for peace with cheering, flag-waving crowds, church bells ringing, factories closing, street lights unmasked, King & Queen drive through London, pubs stay open until beer runs out.
- 19th UK had casualties of over 3 million including 1 million dead
- 20th League football resumes
- 27th More than 1,500,000 allied POWs released



Coach where Armistice was signed

From RN Officer Fitness Report

Since my last report he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.

This officer should go far and the sooner he starts the better.

When she opens her mouth, it seems this is only to change which ever foot was previously there.

Continued from p6

More Branch News

The **Afternoon Tea Party** was a 'Thank You' event to commemorate the centenary of the end of WWI. It was held on Saturday 13 October at the Conservative Club and supported by HDC Chairman Cllr Lesley Bowles. It attracted 35 ticket paying visitors seated at tables for four who were able to chat as they listened to appropriate back-ground music. After a break for the attractive well patronised buffet there was war time music played on a keyboard with songs in which most people joined but no one used the dance floor. During



the afternoon a few people looked at the Memorabilia and Slide Show of WWI pictures. The raffle was popular and profitable with the draw conducted by Cllr Bowles.

Overall the event was a success thanks to the organiser Pat Middleton and her team.

Coffee Morning

Earlier on that Saturday some Branch members had been at a coffee morning at the Theatre either as helpers or visitors. Sea Cadets manned the Tombola and books/CDs stalls and the ACF cadets were on Kitchen duty. The event raised funds for the Poppy Appeal

Branch members are always welcome at the social events held at **Peaker Park**. Ring MH 414460 to find their next events. Those from next year's programme will be published here when it is available.

Committee Members

Pat Middleton (MH 445827)
Kathie Morley (MH 419714)
Barbara Pickup (MH 433492)
Brian Thomas (MH 431119)

Other names may be added later.

LUNCH
AT THE
ANGEL



for good food and good company

4 DECEMBER *MEET IN THE BAR AT NOON*

CHRISTMAS MENU

Roast Turkey with festive trimmings;
Cod loin on mash & sauce; Mushroom
bourguignon & roast potatoes. all with
vegetables.

Christmas Pudding & brandy sauce;
Mango & Passion fruit cheesecake;
Chocolate fudge cake & cream; Fresh
fruit salad & sorbet.

Tea or Coffee & mints £12.50

To book, contact
Jill Mann 01858 461572
jillmann164@gmail.com
To cancel, ring **The Angel (01858
462702)** before 10 am on the day or
you will be charged

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 24 Nov Band Concert- 7.30 at
Baptist Church
- 4 Dec Branch Christmas Lunch at
The Angel
- 12 Dec Branch Meeting & Quiz
- 8 Jan Branch Lunch at The Angel
- 9 Jan Branch Meeting & social
event

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 10 am-noon on the
second Thursday each month

In Touch Next Month

Centre pages story, Miscellany,
Remember This?, News, etc.

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