



The Royal British Legion



Market Harborough Branch

Reg Charity 219279

In Touch

Issue 142

July 2010

The monthly newsletter (founded 1996) of the Market Harborough Branch (BR0106) of the Royal British Legion.

**Next
Monthly Branch
Meeting
Wednesday
11 Aug**

Function Room,
Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd,
Market Harborough
7-30pm

Dead Ringer

In days long ago when local folks ran out of burial space they used to exhume old graves and re-use the space.

When the coffins were opened some were found to have scratch marks on the inside. They realised that some were being buried alive so people had a piece of string tied to their wrists connected to a bell on the surface. In the event of them only being unconscious they could pull the string and ring the bell. Obviously some one had to sit in the graveyard to listen for the bell, at least overnight. So from this we get the sayings 'graveyard shift' and 'saved by the bell' and a 'dead ringer'. True or not?

Please mention our advertisers if you use them, it will encourage them to renew next year.



ANGEL the

HOTEL & RESTAURANT

37 High St, Market Harborough
LE16 7AF. Tel 01858 462702

* A family owned hotel with 28 en-suite rooms.

*Function room for private parties

*Family restaurant serving evening meals and traditional Sunday lunch

* afternoon teas (Apr to Sept)

* Lounge bar - a great place to enjoy a drink with friends

Waiting to Welcome You

Armed Forces Day- Flag Raising

The Branch was well represented on Monday 21 June when Harborough District Council raised the Armed Forces Flag to mark the opening of the Armed Forces Week.

Alongside comrades from the RNA, RAFA, St John's and representatives of the ACF and ATC branch members including the President and Chairman stood in a minutes silence after the flag had been raised. After the ceremony the Harborough District Council Chair invited all present to join her and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for light refreshments.

Branch Web Site

The new branch web site has been launched by Tom Ashmore.

Using the RBL corporate web site design but retaining control of the content will enable the branch to increase its profile both within the RBL and the local community.

Still in the development stage Tom will add more information over the coming months. The site is at www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough.

Welfare

If you are aware of any one who qualifies for, and who may benefit from, the Royal British Legion welfare services please contact

Betty Ramsey
01858 434923

Tales from the Sea

I always wanted to sail on a tall ship so I booked as crew on STS Lord Nelson.



Monday 29 May 2009 I boarded the ship in Dublin. I was allocated to one of four watches, each had an experienced watch leader, a member of permanent crew, and 5 others with little or no experience. We were shown how to climb the mast & furl the sails, clipped only on to the 'yard' not while climbing the rigging itself. And it is a long way down! We left port after lunch. It was all hands on deck as we hauled sails and set yards. Pulling on a bewildering array of ropes and yards to raise sails and set the angle of the yards to catch the wind. If we hadn't been told which ropes to pull we could have pulled the plug out. The skipper decided we were safe to do it for real and the topsail and t'gallant were set and engine turned off. My next watch was middle watch (Tuesday midnight to 0400). Pulled on warm clothing and waterproofs and went on deck. The ship was rolling and pitching heavily and the wind driving the rain into my face. The skipper said a gale force 8 was expected and we were to run before it for shelter behind Anglesey. She was concerned as to whether we would reach shelter before the gale hit us, she wasn't the only one! Helming proved tricky I was alone steering the ship while the watch braced the sails, The wind and boat movement made it difficult to keep a straight course. I tried to bring her round before reaching the heading but I was either too soon or too late and the wake meandered behind us. Two of the watch went down with sea sickness so we were short handed for the rest of the watch. We finished at 0415 and I hit my pillow securely strapped in so I didn't fall out of the bunk. At 0600 I woke with a start as the anchor rattled its way to the sea bed in a bay. At 0500 Thursday after the gale had abated we set sail for the Isle of Man. During the passage there were several calls of 'all hands on deck' as we raised and lowered sails. We stayed in Douglas until 1500 Friday then set sail for Dublin in bright sunshine. I was on first watch (8pm to midnight), and saw whales and a basking shark. The sea picked up and two of the watch succumbed to mal de mer leaving us once again short handed. We arrived in Dublin 1100 on Saturday to an 'open ships' event. Happy Hour prepared the ship for opening to the public. I had to leave Sunday lunchtime for the ferry home and I was back late evening. Abiding memories - daily 'happy hour' - not 'two-fers' in the bar but swabbing decks, polishing brass, and cleaning the 'heads', running before the gale, helming the ship alone in the dark on the heaving deck. Enjoyable but would I go again - perhaps, I would like more time at sea but would it be as exciting?

Pictures - top picture - looking for'ard . Right - my shared cabin



Coronel and the Falklands

At 7-04 pm on Sunday 1 Nov 1914 the guns of a German naval squadron consisting of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Leipzig and Dresden opened fire on the British ships Good Hope, Monmouth, Glasgow and the merchant vessel Ontrantro off Coronel. The German's brought to bear twelve 8.2" guns; the largest guns on the British side were Good Hope's two 9.2 guns backed up by two 6" guns on the Monmouth and 4" guns on the Glasgow. Even the short range fire power of the British ships fell well short of that of the Germans.

Perhaps even more significantly the German sailors were considered to be the finest in the German navy while the majority of British sailors had until a few months before been civilians. The first salvo saw Good Hopes fore-deck explode in a sheet of flame and when the smoke cleared it revealed the twisted metal of what were once her 9.2" guns. The Good Hope received the undivided attention of the Scharnhorst who fired four salvos every minute at her. She turned broadside on to bring her 6" guns and her stern 9.2" into action, but only at the rate of one shell per minute, Shells continued to pour into her and her return fire gradually died away as her gunners were cut down by shell and flames. At 7.42 in a last desperate attempt to inflict damage the Good Hope turned directly towards the Gneisenau and charged towards the ship. Both Gneisenau and Scharnhorst rained shells on the Good Hope until she ground to a stop

her desks awash with flames. At 7.53 the fires reached the main magazine. The explosions were so loud that sailors held their ears on the German ship Nürnberg some 6 miles away. Flames shot 200' into the air and the ship was torn in two. As the fore part sank beneath the waves a final defiant salvo came from the aft port guns before it too sank beneath the waves taking her crew of 900 men with her. Gneisenau's second salvo hit the Monmouth's foredeck, flames and black smoke billowed down the port side. The British ships closed the distance until finally they were in range. However this made them even more vulnerable to the larger German guns. Monmouth's fore-turret disappeared completely after a shell exploded on the foredeck and the burning cordite turned the mess decks into a living hell. Shells from Gneisenau pounded the ship adding to the carnage and shambles below decks. An armour piercing shell exploded in stacked ammunition and a curtain of flame engulfed the starboard side. Monmouth began to veer to starboard losing speed as Glasgow dropped astern so she didn't mask the sporadic return fire of Monmouth. More shells fell on Monmouth and she listed heavily to port, heavy seas flooded the gaping bows yet it seemed the fires below decks were being brought under some control. Monmouth dropped further away from the battle area. At 8.03 with the enemy out of sight Glasgow went in search of Monmouth. They found her and were about to come to her aid when they spotted 4 enemy ships heading towards them. Glasgow had

no option but to leave or she would surely have been overwhelmed by the enemy. She signalled to Monmouth her intentions and silence fell on the ship as they heard the rousing cheers from the decks of the Monmouth.



Above - HMS Monmouth

The German ship Nürnberg closed in and her search light picked out the Ensign still flying bravely from the stern of Monmouth as she slowly moved through the waves. The captain of the Nürnberg gave the Monmouth every chance to strike her colours waiting several minutes before his first salvo was fired above the Monmouth in a last attempt to force her surrender. He ceased fire and waited. Monmouth gathered speed and turned towards the Nürnberg. She was either trying to ram or bring her starboard guns to bear. Nürnberg opened fire. Her salvos ripped into Monmouth tearing the hull open and ripping decks apart. Slowly Monmouth listed further and further until the port deck rail sank out of sight beneath the waves. Still the shells landed on her until at 8.58 her stern, with the Ensign still flying sank beneath the cold dark waters. With seas too heavy to effect any rescue and seeing smoke on the horizon the

Nürnberg moved away. Over 650 men died on Monmouth.

The British government fearing that the Falkland Islands would become a target for an invasion supported by the German battle fleet arranged for a much larger fleet to assemble at Port Stanley. The battle cruisers, Invincible and Inflexible, fitted with eight 12-inch guns, the armoured cruisers Carnarvon, Cornwall and Kent; two light cruisers, Bristol and Glasgow; and an old vessel, Canopus, grounded at Port Stanley and used as a form of make-shift fortress.

On the morning of December 8 1914 Gneisenau and Nürnberg detached from the main squadron, to attack the wireless station and port facilities at Port Stanley. Realising his danger too late - and having missed the golden opportunity to shell Sturdee's fleet while in port - Spee and his squadron dashed for the open sea, pursued by the British. Realising that he could not hope to outrun the fast British battle cruisers, Spee decided to bring about an engagement just after 1.20pm. Four German cruisers were sunk, with Spee's flagship Schamhorst sinking rapidly first, followed by Gneisenau, Nürnberg and Leipzig.

Ten British sailors died during the battle, while none of the British ships were badly damaged. However 2,200 German sailors were killed or drowned in the encounter. The Dresden escaped and eventually was found at Mas a Tierra on March 13. Glasgow opened fire despite Dresden being in neutral waters. Dresden surrendered and she was then scuttled.

'Ramsay Ramblers'

Once again Betty and family will be taking on the 10k Poppy Walk Challenge in London.

The event requires entrants to walk round the main sights of London and answer treasure hunt type questions. The questions range from fairly easy to downright difficult and on top of that you have to find your way round the route.

Betty would like as many people as possible to sponsor her, and this can be done after the event as well as before so it is not too late. Please be as generous as you can as all money raised will go towards the Branch Poppy Appeal Collection.

This is the 5th time that the Ramblers have undertaken the challenge.

Last year they were worthy Group winners

Puzzle Corner

Can you find a 3 letter word which will fit the spaces between the letters below to make 5 new words

M - - - N

C - - - T

S - - - CE

H - - - RS

P - - - ED

Items From the Last Branch Meeting

A member has kindly paid for the necessary equipment for our new branch standard bearer - many thanks from the branch for your generous support.

Armed Forces Day raised £180 for Help the Heroes. The event was well supported by the ACF, ATC, St John's and branch members. The general public were less visible, however the event was a success.

December Lunch - do members want a normal branch lunch at the Angel in December? Please let Glenys know your views so necessary arrangements can be made. The Christmas lunch will be held in January.

A Branch Anniversary Dinner will be held in March next year - watch for more details.

The branch may be organising an event to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Legion and are considering a float in the carnival.

Betty Ramsey has been co-opted onto the County Executive - congratulations Betty, I am sure you will contribute very effectively to the workings at County level.

The branch meeting approved an increase of 50p in the branch subscription making the annual fee £13 of which £2 is retained for branch purposes.

Sainsbury's Supports 2010 Poppy Appeal

After recently choosing The Royal British Legion as their charity of the year, Sainsbury's in Market Harborough have pledged this November to turn their store from orange to red. Local Poppy Appeal Organiser Dave Pryor, and Sainsbury's PR Ambassador Melanie Wisher are working together to ensure that this year Sainsbury's can raise as much money as possible for The Royal British Legion. The Royal British Legion will be celebrating its 90th Anniversary in 2011, so to have Sainsbury's on board at this special time is fantastic. As well as already having the store decked out with collecting tins, several employees have pledged to do a freefall skydive to raise funds as well. The Poppy Appeal will also be holding a recruitment drive to sign up new collectors this November.

Poppy Appeal Register Now!

Dave Pryor is holding a Poppy Forum to enable everyone to meet the Poppy Appeal Organiser and discuss how you can help with this year's appeal.

He would like his 'army' of existing volunteers to come and register on the new system, to ensure that he can easily keep in touch and no one is missed out as may have happened in previous years.

Call into the Small Lounge at the Angel Hotel, on Tuesday 27th of July between 09:00 to 17:00hrs.

If you can't make the event then phone Dave on 01858 431999



Tuesday Aug 3

**Reservation before 27 July
to Glenys Hocking-Davies
01858 467835**

Cancellations on the day to Glenys before 11 am. If Glenys is not available phone the Angel 01858 462702 before 11am or the meal will be charged for.

Menu

*Pork & Leek sausages, onion
gravy, mashed potatoes, garden
peas*

*Smoked haddock and spinach
pie, new potatoes, summer salad*

*Oven roasted supreme of
chicken, roast potatoes, stuffing
and vegetables*

*Raspberry & white chocolate
cheesecake, with cream*

Fresh fruit salad with cream

*White chocolate ice cream bomb
with strawberries*

*Orange & cranberry roulade
coffee & mints*

Only £8

Meet in the bar at noon

What's Going On?

- 3 Aug Lunch at the Angel.
4 Sep RNA Coffee morning
Harborough Theatre
9am to noon.
- 7 Sep Lunch at the Angel.
10 Sep ATC Charity Ball for
cancer charities.
Tickets £17-50 from
the editor.
- 18 Sep Concert by Massed
Bands of Household
Division at the Albert
Hall, Tickets £11 - £40
Meet at noon in the
bar.
- 30 Oct Poppy Appeal Launch
6 Nov Festival of Remem
brance - De Montfort
Hall. Band of the
Blues & Royals
(contact Les Moore)

Puzzle Corner—Answer

The word is
'our'

mourn
court
source
hours
poured

Branch Contacts

Secretary
Betty Ramsay
01858 434923

Treasurer & Membership

Secretary
Myra Grewcock
01536 762228

Poppy Appeal
Dave Pryor
01858 431999

Wreaths
John Liddell
01858 465003

Standard Bearer
George Fleming
01858 462711

Social & Fund Raising
Glens Hocking-Davies
01858 467835

Editor - *In Touch*

John Standish
5 Manor Rd
Fleckney
LE8 8TN

Tel - 0116 2404170

in-toucheditor@hotmail.co.uk

Next Committee Meeting 5 Aug

And Finally

An Oily Topic

Each year 16 million gallons of oil run off pavements etc into streams, rivers and eventually into the oceans round the United States.

Should we tell President Obama and BP?

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the Market Harborough Branch.

*The editor reserves the right to decide what is to be published and to edit material and no part of *In Touch* may be reproduced without his prior permission.*

The newsletter is online at www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough.