



The Royal British Legion
Market Harborough Branch

Entry for



for the year

1st October, 1998 to 30th September, 1999.

**The Royal British Legion
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND
The Jack Quain Endeavour Trophy**

This Trophy is awarded annually to the Branch adjudged to have made the Greatest Endeavour throughout the year. Entries for the year ending 30th September 1999 are to be completed and returned by **December 20th 1999**

For County use

BRANCH NAME.....NUMBER AB.....
Market Harborough.....031

Details of any special effort to raise money
for the Poppy Appeal during the year

Previous year's improved planning, organisation
and control maintained for 1998 Collections.
Three days of Street Collections
Market Stall display redesigned & improved.

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Details of any special endeavour carried out by the Branch
during the year e.g. recruiting, publicity, and PR.

Le Légion d'Honneur Ceremony attracted much publicity
& press coverage. Video film made for branch archives.
President and Chairman interviewed on local radio.
Fund-raising events are also Recruitment occasions.
Leaflets about Legion & Branch in Information Centre.

Pages
5,6,7

Details of any effort to raise money for Branch Funds during the year

2 Coffee Mornings with Raffle, Tombola & Stalls.
Stall at the Market Harborough Carnival, with Tombola.
Occasional raffles. Income from advertisers in *In Touch*.
Donations e.g. in lieu of flowers at a member's funeral.

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Is Branch Direct Debit registered for payment of National Affiliation Fees
YES ~~NO~~

Is Branch Direct Debit registered for payment of Branch subscriptions
YES ~~NO~~

What percentage of Branch membership covenanted *NOT IN BRANCH RECORDS*

Chairman.....For.....Branch

Secretary.....Date *17/12/99*



The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch



About the Branch

- Formed on 20th March, 1923, the Branch celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 1998.
- Centred on Market Harborough, it covers a 12 miles wide rural area, west and north of the Northamptonshire border.
- The nearest RBL Branches are in Northants.
- There are local branches of R N A and R A F A. Some of our Members belong to these associations.
- There are no nearby military units and so no source of likely younger members.
- After a period of decline it has been building up again over the past few years.
- It is still a fairly small branch, with about 100 members.
- There is no associated RBL Club.
- The branch now has no premises, having sold a building acquired just after WW2, in 1991.
- The proceeds of the sale are held in a Trust a/c at RBL HQ.
- Meetings are held in a hired room in the Market Harborough Conservative Club building.



The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch



Objectives and Philosophy

General Objectives set in January 1997 were,

1. A greater sense of comradeship amongst all members.
2. More members participating in Branch activities.
3. Local Welfare responsibilities to be carried out fully.
4. Increase still further the Branch's contribution to Legion funds.
5. Improve the prospects for the Branch's long term survival.

Our Philosophy

We believe that success with the first objective leads to success with the others, but that this in turn reinforces the sense of comradeship, interest and members' pride in their Branch. The more we do with and for our members, the more they benefit from their membership and the more the Branch prospers.

The spur for much of our endeavour in 1997/8 was the Branch 75th Anniversary and the ready acceptance that special efforts were called for. For 1998/9 there would be no such reason but the honour of being awarded the trophy for what was done the previous year has been an incentive to at least maintain the momentum we had achieved. We then claimed that the branch was

Active, Caring, Friendly, Innovative, Outward Looking

These are the criteria which guide the direction of the branch and we believe lead to good performance in the areas of endeavour for which the trophy is awarded.

For areas of Branch Endeavour in 1998/1999
and Objectives for 1999/2000,
please see the following pages.



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Activities with and for Members

- The practice of following each monthly Branch meeting with a Social event has continued. These have included talks, a quiz, a hobbies competition, games, buffets, members' stories, informal chat, etc.

The number of Members attending meetings has been maintained and more seem to stay chatting longer!

- Pub lunches introduced in 1998, were continued and remained popular.
- A Dinner held in October, 1998 as one of the Anniversary year events and an informal Dinner at a local Bistro were well attended.
- A novice Bowls afternoon and an evening of Long Alley Skittles were new innovations.
- The original branch newsletter, ***In Touch***, and the news sheet, ***In Touch, Too***, have continued to be published in alternate months. Both are much appreciated especially by house bound and other members who cannot get to meetings.
- A coach trip to the Newmarket Poppy Race Day was much enjoyed by a group of members and friends. The Branch Standard was carried in the Parade.
- Members helped at & supported two Coffee Mornings and a stall at the Carnival.

Objectives for 1999/2000

Better forward planning and publicity of social events.
Co-operation with other Branches and local groups especially for outings.



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Recruiting

- The leaflet designed last year, aimed at attracting new members, is still displayed at any suitable branch event, in the library and the Information Centre.
- The branch again had a newly designed stall at the town Carnival. The Membership Secretary was on duty. the stall was also used for fund-raising.
- At each of the two Coffee Mornings, leaflets were on each table and members on duty spoke to potential recruits.
- Members are still encouraged to “spread the word” in their everyday contacts with other people. As the branch becomes more active and attractive it becomes easier to explain the advantages of membership. The newsletters provide a constant reminder to members of what the branch is doing. "Blowing our own trumpet” is encouraged!!
- Retention of members is the purpose of much of the Branch’s activities. If members do not wish to leave, they are more likely to encourage others to join.

Objectives for 1999/2000

To attract more younger members through better, more direct publicity.
Encourage Poppy Appeal collectors to join the Legion.



The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch



Publicity & Public Awareness

- The branch has maintained good contacts and relations with the local papers and news photographer. Most significant branch events are reported including,
The 75th Anniversary Dinner
Le Légion d'Honneur Ceremony
The award of the Jack Quain Trophy. Additional publicity was obtained when a member's letter to the Editor criticised the headline "Old Soldiers win top award".
- The branch President and Chairman were interviewed on local radio.
- The Remembrance Day Parade and Service organised by the branch attracts good public support and received good press coverage, including photographs.
- Colourful posters advertising the two coffee mornings and the events themselves gave the branch good publicity.
- The eye-catching stall at the Carnival prominently publicised the branch.
- Details of the branch including names and telephone numbers of Officers are included in the Leicestershire Library Service information system, Infolink.
- The branch Web Site was further developed, given a simpler name (www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net) and by the end of the year had been visited over 1000 times. there have been many favourable comments and some requests for advice from other branches

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Public Relations - External Contacts and Communication

- Those invited to the Anniversary Dinner, Remembrance Parade and Service and Le Légion d'Honneur Ceremony included the Lord-Lieutenant, our local M P, District Council Chief Executive and past and present Chairmen, heads of the local Police Unit and local Fire Station, officers & members of local RNA and RAFA branches, ACF and ATC unit commanders, Scout and Guide leaders, heads of local Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance branches.
- Good relations have been maintained with District Council officials.
- The branch has continued to be involved with the local community, e.g. through membership of South Leicestershire Council of Voluntary Service, acceptance of responsibility for providing a week of activities in the local Millennium Programme, participation in the local Carnival.
- Close contact with neighbouring Husbands Bosworth Branch has been maintained and approaches made to other branches on both sides of the County boundary with a view to having joint social activities & outings..
- We have maintained close contact with RNA and RAFA and with the two local Cadet forces.

Objectives for 1999/2000

To produce imaginative and worthwhile events during our Millennium Week.
Closer contact with other local Branches and with youth groups.



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Fund Raising

- Raffles were held at the Anniversary on 2nd October, 1998 and the outing to Newmarket.
- A Tombola was run on the Branch stall at the Carnival on 12th June.
- Coffee Mornings held at Harborough Theatre on 1st May & 24th July. Attractions included Tombola, cakes, Books & Plants stalls and Raffles.
- Local traders paid for advertising space in our newsletter, ***In Touch***.
- At the request of the family, “donations in lieu of flowers” were received following the death of a member in Decenber, 1998.
- A benefactor contributed towards the cost of Le Légion d’Honneur Ceremony.
- The Carnival Committee made a donation in support of ***In Touch***.
- Unsolicited small donations were received from members.
- 50p is sought from each member at a branch meeting as a contribution to a

Objectives for 1999/2000

Run the two Coffee mornings booked for February and June.
Have a stall at the Carnival perhaps with a different theme.



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Poppy Appeal

- The successful 1997/8 planning and organisation was continued including, Map of House to House Collectors' pitches and other plans outlined at October branch meeting and member helpers recruited. Systematic recording and control of destination, despatch and return of each tray and box. Prompt counting, recording and banking of cash.
Records showing comparison with previous years' collections for each collector and static collectionpoint, used to plan improved cover, location, etc., next year. Individuals try to beat last year's figure. Distribution centre for the town still at home of Poppy Appeal Assistants (husband and wife team) who prepared the trays and boxes.
- A more suitable, less domestically disruptive, distribution centre sought for 1999 Appeal. (Local ACF unit provided space in their building).
- Street Collections again made on market day (Tuesday) as well as Friday and Saturday.
- A stall in the Market Hall again used as a display, collecting point and control centre and base for street collectors. The redesigned display received much favourable comment. The stall rent again paid by market traders.
- The local press again gave good publicity to the Poppy Appeal.
- Our Vice President remained responsible for arrangements in the outlying villages and the Poppy Organiser, our Branch President for the provision of wreaths, the receipt of donations and the overall appeal arrangements.

The total collection for 1998/1999 was £10,500 another record.

Objectives for 1999/2000

Recruitment of more house to House Collectors, especially for new Estates.
More contact with, & encouragement of, non-member collectors.



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Caring and Welfare

- A new wheelchair was purchased for short-term loan to Members and others.
- A new Welfare (Service) Committee was elected and now works more effectively as a team.
- More home and hospital visits have been made and not only by members of the Welfare team.
- The sending of “Get Well” cards to the sick and of messages of condolence to the bereaved has become more systematic.
- Branch members showed their respect for their three colleagues who died during the year by attending their funerals. The Standard was carried in the one case where this had been requested.
- The branch newsletters are still delivered by hand to nearly all members. For a good proportion of those unable to attend meetings, this provides a chance to have a word with another member and a reminder that they are not forgotten.

Objectives for 1999/2000

Better links between Welfare Committee & Newsletter distributors.
Better arrangements for home and hospital visits.

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