

## What's Going On?

The Social & Fund-Raising Team Reports

### DIARY OF EVENTS

The date of the next Branch meeting is  
**July 9th**

1 Jul	RNA Trip to National Arboretum
29 Jul	Lunch at the Angel, noon for 12.30
19 Aug	Lunch at the Angel, noon for 12.30
30 Sep	Lunch at the Angel, noon for 12.30
9 Oct	Informal Autumn Dinner, MH Golf Club
18 Oct	Coffee Morning Harboro Theatre 9am-Noon
28 Oct	Lunch at the Angel, noon for 12.30
1 Nov	Festival of Remembrance, de Montfort Hall, Leic.
15 Nov	Remembrance Concert, Baptist Church MH
25 Nov	Lunch at the Angel, noon for 12.30
13 Mar 09	Formal Branch Dinner

### Remembrance Concert 2008

It is a matter of concern that attendance at the annual Remembrance Concert is falling with a consequent loss of revenue for the Poppy Appeal. It would seem that a major factor in this decline is the clash of events on the same evening.

Your committee has decided, quite rightly, that more publicity should be given to the Concert, hence this early start to raise awareness, at least amongst Branch Members.

Those who attend the performances in the Baptist Church will be aware that the programme consists of popular light music played by the superb, prize-winning Harborough Band. We are fortunate in that the Baptist Church makes no charge for the use of their premises.

All Members are urged to tell friends and relations about the Concert, emphasising the popular appeal of the music. More details will follow in the coming months.

### The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch

Reg. Charity 219279

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Meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough. The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm.

### In Touch

[www.in-touch.ukvet.net](http://www.in-touch.ukvet.net)

THE MONTHLY  
NEWSLETTER OF THE  
MARKET  
HARBOROUGH  
BRANCH OF THE  
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Founded 1996

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Current File



## The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

### In Touch

Issue 117

June 2008



"Don't worry, Sarge, I'm right behind you!"  
Luke Coleman, a keen member of the Army Cadet Force, honoured the RBL when he marched in the Parade of County Standards. He is seen with Sgt Chris Bullock.  
(See centre pages.)

LE16 9AB  
LEGION





Ex-Coldstreamer, John Walker and his wife Pat, who took this picture, attended the parade in April following the return of the Regiment from Afghanistan, where they were deployed on operations in Helmand Province.

Stationed in Windsor, they have been engaged in somewhat more peaceful duties, including lining the route from Buckingham Palace to Horse Guards for Trooping the Colour Parade.

... and talking of Trooping the Colour, the two Johns - Walker and Cox - attended the Colonel's Review on June 7 along with Pat and trusty camera. This revealing shot shows a sticky John C. cooling his pedal extremities (feet) in Green Park.



#### One for the Ladies:

They are in bed and he says to her, "I'll make you the happiest woman in the world". Says she "I'll miss you".

## The Finest Army in the World

An article in the series written exclusively for In Touch.

By Lt Col Mike Morgan

### The Two Cooks at Kohima

The best cooks in the British Army go to the Sergeants Mess, the next best to the Junior Ranks Cookhouse, the next best to the Officer's Mess and what's left to 'Higher Headquarters'. This rule is part of that great unwritten volume of Army Lore - The Official Queens Regs. - it is just the way things are, and the way things have always been.

In early April 1944 the 4th Royal West Kent's were digging themselves in at Kohima in North East India. Two of the West Kent chefs, Big Geordie, (five foot nothing in his ammo boots), and Little Scouse, (six foot six in his socks), had been detached to Brigade Headquarters to cook for the brigade staff. Now this was a serious insult to both Little Scouse and Big Geordie - only the really 'crap' cooks got sent to 'Brigade'. They had shared cooking shifts for some time, and both blamed each other for this ultimate insult. The shame of it.

'It's 'im, the scouse git', announced Big Geordie to anybody that would listen, 'can't boil watter wi'oot burnin it - and e tinkz if it ain't black it ain't done'

'Sod off Geordie, ye wazzak', Little Scouse would reply, also to anybody that would listen, 'It wuz you that give most o' the Mess the runs wiv yer Curry Surprise', 'Only surprise was the speed it reappeared out the RSM'.

Big Scouse and Little Geordie did not have any time to further consider life's inequities. The Japanese had just closed the road into Kohima. The Japanese were determined to wipe out this tiny Kohima garrison before further British and Indian reinforcements could be bought up. Every man would be needed to fight.

'You two', shouted the RSM, to Big Geordie and Little Scouse, 'Quit ye bickerin' and grab ye rifles - ye goin in' line'.

Big Geordie and Little Scouse grabbed their webbing, helmets and rifles and followed the RSM down

the hill, where they were deposited in a two-man slit trench, part of a line of similar trenches overlooking what had been, until very recently, the local Governor's tennis courts. Boxes of ammo, grenades and rations were dumped in on top of them, and they were left to their own devices.

Of course, left to their own devices meant they continued to bicker like an old married couple. 'Now we're flippin' riflemen', muttered Big Geordie, his eyes only just on a level with the lip of the slit trench. 'S'pose ye gonna blame me for this as well eh?' said Little Scouse - on his knees so only his head and shoulders appeared above the slit trench. The bickering continued and the Japanese attacked.

For the next seven days, along with the Riflemen of the West Kent's, and all the other cooks, clerks and bottlewashers of 161st Brigade, Big Geordie and Little Scouse defended against wave after wave of Japanese attacks. The fighting was vicious and at close quarters. No mans' land was the width of the tennis courts. The Japanese dead piled up in front of the British, and the British dead slid to the brass strewn floor of their trenches. During lulls in the fighting Big Geordie and Little Scouse could still be heard bickering - well at least it proved they were still alive - the other riflemen grabbed what sleep they could when they could, and could not help but smile, as 'Ye useless Scouse Git, ye missed im', and 'ye dozy Geordie wazzak, ye nearly shot me', drifted over the battlefield.

Dawn on the eighth day and the RSM crawled up to the rear of Geordie and Scouse's slit trench. For yards around the ground was littered with empty grenade boxes and Japanese dead - some only a yard from the trench. Geordie and Scouse were black from the smoke and bloody from several minor shrapnel wounds. Big Geordie stood and Little Scouse knelt in brass four inches deep.

'Right you two', said the RSM, 'Holiday's over, get back to Brigade and get a hot meal and a brew on the go, I want scran for 250 ready in two hours'.

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# OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

September  
12-14 2008.

Spanhoe Airfield,  
a former WW2  
airbase located

between the villages of  
Harringworth & Laxton near Corby, Northants

The event is organised by the  
315th Historical Society and is dedicated to the  
315th TCG (Troop Carrier Group) along with the  
American 82nd Airborne Division,  
the British 1st Airborne Division  
and the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade  
who were flown into Arnhem and Nijmegen during  
Operation Market Garden in September 1944.

An important event called Operation Market Garden is being held at Spanhoe over the weekend of 12-14 September 2008. It is in commemoration of those soldiers who fought in this campaign in Holland in September 1944. It may be remembered that the last event held here in 2005 was called Operation Spanhoe.

During the war Spanhoe was home to the 315th Troop Carrier Group during which time they were involved in D-Day, Market Garden and the Rhine crossing. Veterans from the 315th TCG will again be flown over from



America by current serving troops in the 315th Airlift Wing in a C-17 Globemaster.

This has created much interest in the USA with American news channels, BBC America, SKY TV and the US History Channel all interested in coming over



with the Veterans to cover their journey, etc. Veterans from the UK, Holland and Poland will also be in attendance at the event and will be featured on television and radio in the UK.

One of the highlights of the event will be members of the current 82nd Airborne re-creating the Market Garden parachute drop from a C-47 Dakota or C-17 Globemaster. It is believed that this is the first time the 82nd will have dropped on UK soil since the war and will generate much publicity.

The event includes an air show featuring Spitfire, Hurricane and Dakota as well as the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. There will also be a re-enactment battle based on the Arnhem pocket as well as re-enactor displays, trade stalls, vintage cars and motorbikes, working steam exhibits - to name but a few.

Entertainment on the Saturday night will be provided by Ray McVay and the Glenn Miller Orchestra (by ticket only) along with Paul Harper, Lola Lamour, etc., during the day. A memorial service will take place on the Sunday morning.

The event is strictly non-profit making and all proceeds will be given to the Royal British Legion, Help for Heroes, Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance and other locally based charities.

For up to date information, please see the website:  
[www.operationmarketgarden2008.co.uk](http://www.operationmarketgarden2008.co.uk)

## BRANCH MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

It is with much regret that we record the passing of  
Betty Monk, 36 Andrew Macdonald Close,  
Market Harborough.

We welcome a new member:  
Peter Turner 01858 434476 4 Ashfield Road,  
Market Harborough, LE16 7LX.

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Big Geordie and Little Scouse crawled, then crept, then walked as the distance between them and the Japanese snipers increased. And of course they still bickered as they crawled, and crept and walked, and were still heard to be bickering several hours later as fresh troops grabbed a quick meal and a brew from them, on their way through to relieve the West Kent's. The siege of Kohima was over.

Four weeks later and General Slim himself came to visit and congratulate the West Kent's on their remarkable 'Battle of the Tennis Courts'. Big Geordie and Little Scouse were also lined up for inspection.

Eventually General Slim reached Little Scouse, and looking up he said, 'And what do you do my man?'

'I'm a cook sir', said Little Scouse looking down. 'No, no', said Slim smiling, 'In the modern Army you're not a cook, you're a chef.'

'Thank you sir', beamed Little Scouse. 'And what do you do?', asked Slim, looking down at Big Geordie. 'I'm the head of the Roman Catholic Church', said Big Geordie. 'Eh?' said the General.

'Well', Big Geordie informed him, as he glanced upwards and sideways at Little Scouse, 'If that twit is a 'chef', than I'm the flippin' Pope.'

The deathly silence that followed was only broken by a high pitched scream which had started to erupt somewhere in the vicinity of the RSM.

Guy goes to the doctor.  
"Doc, I've got a cricket ball stuck up my backside."

"How's that?"

"Oh, don't you start!"

A Tommy Cooper Gem





**Poppy  
Appeal  
2007/8**

## Awards for Long Serving Appeal Stalwarts

Our Poppy Appeal Organiser, Caroline Windsor, hosted a ceremony held on Saturday, 24 May to recognise the dedicated service of long-serving voluntary collectors.

Certificates, which are awarded for every five years service, were presented by Cllr Brian Smith, Harborough District Council Chairman, to twenty-eight collectors.

The current holder of the long-serving record Dick Fulford, who has been supporting the Poppy Appeal as a collector and in other ways for no less than sixty years. Hot on Dick's heels are Maurice Stanton, who has notched up fifty years, Jessie Gilbert with forty and the local Army Cadet Force Unit close behind with 38 years.

Our guests included Peter Roffey, RBL County President, and local MP Edward Garnier.

In thanking the Volunteers, Caroline announced the current total raised this year - a magnificent result:

**£23,679**

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## The Merry (and Memorable) Month of May



*Top: Standard Bearers parade in The Square.*

*Above: The smartly turned-out ATC Band.*

*Below: Cllr Brian Smith presents awards to Army Cadets L/Cpl Charlotte Chase and Cpl Callum Lepper.*



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## County Standards Parade in Harborough



Market Harborough Branch hosted the Leicestershire & Rutland County 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Standard Bearers Association Rededication Service in St Dionysius Church on Sunday, 1 June.

Twenty-two Standard Bearers and members of the RBL marched to the Church led by the 1084 Squadron Air Training Corps Band. The rededication service was conducted by the Branch Chaplain, the Reverend Richard Brand. The Last Post was superbly played in Church by two ATC buglers. There was an excellent turn-out with 150 in the Congregation.

After the service, the participants, again led by the ATC Band, marched to the War Memorial in The Square, where wreaths were laid.

When it was realised that far more people than anticipated were attending the event, an SOS was sent to the Conservative Club, where refreshments were being prepared. Extra food was obtained and most visitors went home reasonably satisfied. A raffle was held, organised by John Cox, and over £100 was raised.

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