

Editorial

The most prominent event of the past three weeks has been, of course, the death and funeral of Her Majesty The Queen Mother. It was well covered (perhaps over covered?) by the Press and television. The Royal British Legion was represented on the day of the funeral in London and were to be seen as a group of standard bearers at the side of the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

It was a nice gesture that, by the Queen Mother's own wishes, the wreath from the top of her coffin was returned to Westminster Abbey to be placed on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. This was where, many years earlier, she had placed her wedding bouquet.

So passed another era.

Tom Ashmore has been very busy again. As you know, Mark Hudson set up a website for our branch. Now Tom has put In Touch on the net. See the article on Page 7.

For those members who do not have computers, the communications team are, in the near future, intending to publish a book of some 100 pages, containing a reprint of some of the best stories and articles which have appeared in our newsletter since its inception in 1996. Many of these, by now no doubt forgotten, are well worth a second reading. Indeed many will have appeared before some members joined us. (Over half our members have joined us since Issue No. 1). Ω



80th Anniversary

2003 is another significant year in the history of the Branch (and at least three members!). How should we celebrate it? The question was put at the

April Branch meeting when a few preliminary ideas were floated. For example,

- A theme for the year - "80 Years Young!". This would emphasise to ourselves and the public that the branch is youthful in outlook, proud of its past but forward looking and ready to adapt.
- Working with young people, especially the Cadets (e.g. help to create a Sea Cadet unit)
- Supporting (leading?) County initiatives for youth involvement.
- The Birthday Dinner in March would be special (semi-formal) like the Annual Dinners have been.
- Rededication of the Standard Service and Parade.
- A specially designed souvenir for each member (and one for the Branch?)
- A special fundraising event for the Poppy Appeal.
- A planning Team be set up now .

What do you think? Letters to the Editor please with ideas and offers of help! Ω



You will probably have read in the local press or have seen on TV, about the ceremony to unveil a memorial plaque to commemorate the tragic crash near the village in 1945 of a Lancaster bomber in which all seven crew members were killed. Six of these were Australians.

The story of how the Branch became interested in the crash is told in Issue 27, September 2000 of In Touch. What we did not know was that some Foxton residents had



Poppy Walk

In the County Circular explaining about the inaugural Sponsored Poppy Walk which is to take place in London on May 5th, it states that "the ten-mile walk is a challenge both physically and mentally and that you will enjoy yourself, but it can be tough".

In spite of this, two Branch members, secretary Betty Ramsay and her daughter Hilary West, have volunteered to do this walk. As stated above, it will be a ten-mile walk starting and finishing in Covent Garden Market, and taking in some of the sights of London. It is not a race and can be walked at one's own pace, but it will include a quiz for which there are prizes.

If you have not yet added your support by sponsoring Betty in this event, please get in touch with her and do so before the end of the month. All the sponsorship she will raise will be credited to the Market Harborough Branch Poppy Appeal collection.

There is still time for you to join the walk!! Ω

The Foxton Lancaster Memorial

also been trying to trace the relatives and had decided to erect a memorial in honour of those killed.

On 9th April, the 57th anniversary of the crash, Mark Hudson and George Fleming represented the Branch at the unveiling ceremony at which relatives of the crew and a representative of the Australian High Commission were present. Mark was able to speak to the pilot's brother-in-law with whom he had been in contact through the web site. Ω



At Home

To advertise the three Sunday afternoon informal gatherings, there was a notice in one local paper and about 500 individually delivered leaflets. We thank the ATC cadets and branch members who acted as postmen. The first "At Home" on 26th March was poorly attended with just five members hosting two visitors, Mr & Mrs Miller. Doug Miller is already a Legion member and had already applied to transfer from his previous Norfolk branch. We look forward to seeing him at our meetings and functions.

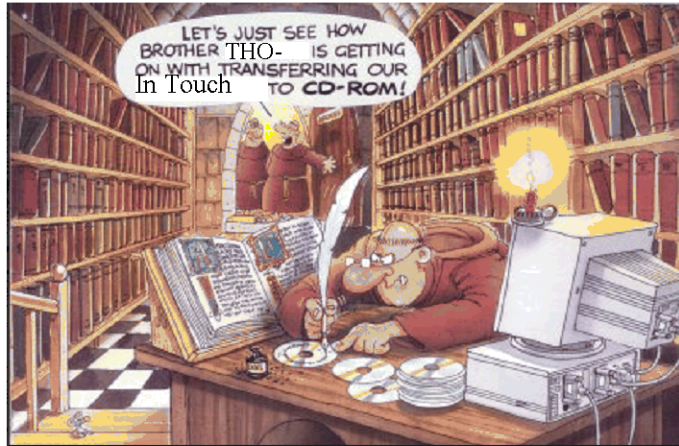
As the notice on p10 states, another At Home will be held on 28th April when it is hoped more members will attend. Ω



Directory of Members

Enclosed with this issue is the new Directory which is being issued to all members. Your name, address and phone number are as given on the slip sent to you a month ago unless you notified us of any amendment or your wish to be excluded from the list.

The format allows easy access to phone numbers whilst the directory is still folded. May we suggest that you keep it near the phone to help you keep in touch with your fellow members. If any of your details change, please notify the Membership Secretary, John Standish. Ω



Just found in the archives, this photo of Tom burning the midnight candle!

In Touch on the Web

Tom Ashmore has now put In Touch on the net. Members with computers on line can now call it up on www.in-touch.ukvet.net.

Each monthly issue will be added to the web site at about the same time as the paper version is published. It will be retained and eventually all the editions will be available from No.1, June 1996. Anything you wish to check back on or would like to read again can be seen on your screen.

The way Tom has set it up means that you can either scroll through complete monthly editions or can bring up the individual article or section you want selected from an index.

Anyone who knows about these things will appreciate that it is a gigantic undertaking to set up and we must congratulate Tom on what I believe must be another first in the world of the Royal British Legion.

And another when it appears on CD-ROM!! Ω



Welcome

It was very pleasing to welcome four visitors to the April Branch meeting and to know that they all wished to fill in Membership Application Forms. We hope that they will take an active part in, and get pleasure and satisfaction from, the business and social aspects of



A bit of Class!

Even the location of the factory suggested an air of quality, approached as it was down a pleasant country road on the outskirts of Coventry. Inside the gates the Jaguar image was everywhere from the spacious, litter-free grounds with neatly clipped lawns, even the cups and saucers in which the welcome coffee was served to the immaculate vehicles awaiting collection for their individual new owners.

A tour of the Jaguar Car Assembly Plant is a fascinating though tiring experience. From the state of the art cinema, to a gallery illustrating all aspects of research, design, testing and production, one is taken by a well informed, uniformed guide to follow the slow moving track to see how everything is added to the bare, but fully painted body shell (produced in another factory). Then on to where there is still real craftsmanship: where the luxury is produced, the components of leather and wood veneer.

The historic collection of vehicles and other exhibits in the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Centre rounds off a memorable visit. Thanks to the Photographic Society for inviting us to join them. Ω



Christmas Comes in March

The following note was pushed through the letterbox of Andy Marriott, our Poppy Appeals

Organiser:

“Our daughter, Rachael, who is in the Royal Navy, is due home at the weekend after being on deployment in the Middle East as part of the war against terrorism. Because she has been away for seven months we are celebrating Christmas Day for her on Sunday 17th March. At about 6 pm, a few players from Harborough Band will play a couple of Christmas Carols outside our home. We just thought we would warn everyone in the street and hope this doesn't cause any inconvenience for anyone.”

This was from Rachael's parents, and more considerate neighbours one could not ask for.

Andy thought the branch could make a gesture to a serving member of Her Majesty's Forces and got in touch with our chairman, and it was agreed that our branch would send Rachael a belated Christmas present.

Andy sent the following letter back:



“Dear Rachael, On behalf of the branch I want to take this opportunity to wish you a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. In fact I will take this opportunity to wish you a belated Happy Easter and Happy Birthday as well!

If you would like to talk to the branch about the role you play in the Navy of today, we

would be most interested. We have some old and some not-so-old salty sea dogs, ranging from experiences with Russian convoys to submariners of the 80's.

The branch exists not only for the welfare of old soldiers, but also the service community of today and those who follow in these footsteps. If the branch can help you at any time please contact us, we will be only too happy to help to the best of our ability.

I will leave you in peace to eat pounds of turkey plus the trimmings, because that's what Mums do best.

I nearly forgot! From us all a small Christmas gift to wish you a merry, if belated, Christmas.” Andy Marriott, for the Chairman.

Andy had purchased a Gift Voucher on our behalf.

A reply was received from Rachael, which reads:

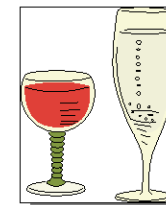
“Dear Andy and the Market Harborough Branch of the Royal British Legion, Just a card to say thank you very much for my belated Christmas card and present. I trust you all had a very merry Christmas and New Year.

It's nice to know that people think about us when we are away on deployment—this one especially. We had an important role as part of the coalition for the war against terrorism. We were actually only supposed to be deployed from September until December, but have only just returned this last week.

If you want me to talk about my role in the Royal Navy, you can contact me at home or phone.

Thank you once again for your support, Rachael.”

Well done, Andy, on your initiative. This is a good illustration of just how wide the net of the RBL can be cast.



Birthday Dinner

25 members and guests attended the 79th Birthday Dinner of the Branch, which was held at the Bull's Head, Clipston, on Friday,

March 22nd.

A good meal was enjoyed by all in very convivial company.

The landlord of the Bull's Head, made a donation of £25 for the Poppy Appeal Fund and a raffle organised by John Cox raised £32.

As the next birthday dinner will the 80th anniversary, the Social Committee have indicated that they hope to plan something special, or as they put it: “More grand” for next year.

We must apologise to four of our members who turned up at the Bull's Head at lunchtime on the day, thinking it was a mid-day meal. This was due to an oversight in that the time was not included in the details of the dinner published in In Touch.

It is worth noting that branch *luncheons* are always held on a *Tuesday*, at 12 for 12.30. Ω



April Pub Lunch

Another successful meal at the Coach and Horses, Lubenham on 16th April, was enjoyed by 21 members and friends. It is most gratifying to know that members were prepared to travel from Billesdon, Great Easton and Lutterworth. Of course, John Cox held a raffle—it raised £30. Ω



BRANCH SUNDAY "AT HOME"

Press Notices and leaflets will again invite members of the public to meet Branch members in the Function Room of the Conservative Club at 2.30 pm on Sunday 28th April or 26th May. These occasions are also a good opportunity, especially for newer members, to learn more about the Branch. Please phone Betty Ramsay on MH 434923 if you can attend on either or both dates.

POPPY FACTORY VISIT -29th MAY

We leave from MH Market Hall at 9 am, make a coffee stop en route to Richmond and have Lunch in the Poppy Factory Restaurant. Due to their limited facilities it is a fixed menu: Soup, Pork Stroganoff with braised rice and cabbage, followed by Semolina or Bread & Butter Pudding & custard. The guided tour starts at 2 pm & takes about 1½ hours. There is a small gift shop. Return MH by about 7.30 pm. Cost including lunch is £14 to be paid in full by 8th May. Fully booked but Tom Ashmore is starting a reserve list. We will not visit the Air Forces Memorial as first announced.

POPPY RACE DAY—30th JUNE

Interest in this proposed outing has been good and a coach has been booked. There are special Legion prices for tickets for entry to the Grandstand or Members' Enclosure which will make the costs inclusive of travel £18 and £22 respectively. Please indicate on the clip-board at the May branch meeting what grade of ticket you require (or ring Tom Ashmore on MH 433108) and pay a deposit of £8.



Diary

Reminders for May (& late April) with some other dates to keep free (see also page 10)

- 28 Apr Branch Sunday afternoon "At Home"
- 2 May Branch Committee meeting
- 8 May Branch Meeting & Buffet
- 26 May Branch Sunday afternoon "At Home"
- 29 May Poppy Factory visit.
- 3,4,8 Jun Jubilee Celebration— Under wraps!!
- 15 Jun Coffee Morning— Harborough Theatre
- 16 Jun** County Standard Bearers' Service
- 18 Jun Pub Lunch—venue to be announced
- 30 Jun Poppy Race Day—Doncaster
- 13 Jul Royal Jubilee Concert— Beaumanor Hall
- 18 Oct Annual Dinner—venue to be announced
- 2 Nov Remembrance Concert

Meetings

Branch meetings are held on the **Second Wednesday** of each month at **7.30 pm** in the downstairs Function Room, , Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The next meeting is on 8th May and will be followed by a buffet.

The Branch Committee meets each month on the **Thursday** preceding the Branch Meeting at **7.30 pm** in the upstairs Lounge, of the Conservative Club Building.



The Royal British Legion

Reg. Charity 219279

Market Harborough Branch



Founded in 1923

In Touch

Issue 43

April 2002

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