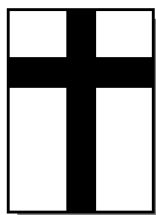


## Editorial

**IT IS ALWAYS** sad when we have to report the passing of one of our members. On this occasion it was Mr Ray Hirst whose obituary is produced below.

Although our thoughts are still in summer, this issue has information about County and National Festivals and our own Remembrance



### Obituary

#### **RAY HIRST, 1911-2001**

Raymond Hirst died on Friday, June 15th, 2001, after a short illness. He had been a member of this branch for less than a year.

Ray had been something of an adventurer in his younger days with trekking trips in many parts of the world, and while still in his twenties, he went to Spain to join the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. During the Second World War, Ray served with the RAF as a fighter pilot and spent some time as a flying instructor in Canada. He also served in Iceland on anti-submarine patrols.

Ray always had a great love of flying and it was his wish that on his 90th birthday, just a few months ahead, he would perform a loop-the-loop in a glider.

Ray leaves a wife, Jennie, and three children, to whom we send our deepest sympathy.

The Standard Bearer and four other Branch members attended the funeral on 20th June.



## Remembrance

**THE LEICESTERSHIRE** Festival of Remembrance will be held at the usual venue of de Montfort Hall, Leicester, on Saturday, 3rd November. The seats are priced at £14.50, £12.50 and £ 10.50; but note there will be a reduction of £4 for members on production of their membership cards. Tickets are available from the District Council, Market Harborough, (which will incur a booking fee) and usual outlets from August 1st.

Entertainment will be by the Syd Lawrence Orchestra and so will no doubt be a popular attraction for the public at large. Anyone wishing to attend is advised to get their tickets early. Due to health and safety regulations, the "muster" will be down scaled to accommodate only 20 standards; but "the dignity of the occasion will be retained".

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**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE** Festival Concert at the Derngate Theatre on Saturday, 27th October again features The Black Dyke Band to provide "an evening to remember". Tickets cost £8 and should be applied for via Tom Ashmore (MH433108) by 31st July.

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**THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL** Festival is on 10th November. If you wish to attend this event, please contact our Secretary, Betty West on MH 434923.

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**MARKET HARBOROUGH** Remembrance Concert performed by the Harborough Band will take place in the MH Baptist Church on Saturday, 10th November at the end of the week when the recreated **GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE** will be open in the Memorial Gardens. More details later.

Ω



## Did you know . . .

**CREDIT FOR THE** great victory at El Alamein is usually attributed to Montgomery's military genius and the fighting spirit of the Eighth Army, but writing in the Sunday Telegraph, Dr James Le Fanu, put forward another theory.

Rommel attributed his defeat to diarrhea! He was actually still convalescing from this disease when the battle commenced.

The area to which the Eighth Army had been forced to retreat had become "badly fouled" due to slackening standards of hygiene. Flies were a serious plague and newly arrived troops were vulnerable to "gippy tummy" and sandfly fever.

This hygiene problem was methodically tackled from the halt at El Alamein. It was dealt with by specially formed units. Incineration of refuse and petrol-tin latrines were introduced and this daily burning greatly improved the general health and therefore the morale of the British troops.

The Germans never instituted such measures, and as the Eighth Army advanced, they found the lines and camps they captured in a really filthy and disgusting condition, with human and camp waste lying everywhere.

The conclusion is that the enemy paid for his contempt of hygiene with an phenomenally high instance of diarrhea disease, which affected more than half their troops and so played a major part in the Allied victory.

Ω



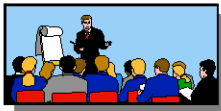
## Coffee Morning

**THE COFFEE** Morning held on Saturday, June 9th, was once again a success. The amount raised for Social Committee funds was £202. Our Chairman thanked all those members had who contributed, in kind or in person, and also mentioned that by the time she arrived at the theatre around 8.30, there was already about a dozen helpers present. Well done everybody! Ω



## Luncheon

**THE LUNCHEON** held at The Old Red Lion at Welham on Tuesday, June 12th, was yet another success story. 26 members attended this social occasion, and actually overflowed from the room allocated to us in the pub. It is good to see the luncheons well supported as they are an excellent occasion to meet and chat with fellow members. Here's to the next time! Ω



## Medals

**AFTER THE** June Branch meeting, Mr George Gamble gave another of his fascinating talks about some of the medals in his collection and the people who won them. This time he spoke mainly about awards to women, a topic which was well received particularly by our lady members!

He has promised to come again to show a video about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which he supports through donations given at his talks.

Watch this space!!

Ω



## Buffet

**IN ANTICIPATION** of more guests to the Medals talk than those who came, a bigger spread than usual had been prepared by the Social Team. "We will never eat all that", was the reaction when the buffet was 'unveiled' but in the event little was left over so it must have been OK. Ω



## Congratulations

**IT WAS** gratifying to learn that messages had been received from Desborough Women's Section and from Lutterworth Branch congratulating our branch on the Lister Award. Thank you for the kind words. Ω



## Spreading the Word

**A SERIES** of talks have been held in the town to acquaint newcomers with some of the facilities and organisations available to them. Betty West and Tom Ashmore participated in the last of these on 19th June with a display stand, exhibits, leaflets and a talk about the work and purpose of the Legion and why they should join our Branch. The audience was small but attentive. Ω



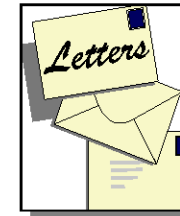
## A New Flag

**IN THIS** 80th Anniversary year, the Legion hopes that its 11 11 11 Remembrance Flag will be displayed on buildings throughout the country. With the aid of a generous donation from member Sam Shutt, the Branch has purchased one of these flags. It is very large (270cm x 137cm) and should make an impressive addition to the Garden of Re-

events later in the year. *Continued on p2*  
Also in this packed edition, is a report from our Secretary, Betty West, who with our Chairman, attended the Annual Conference 2001; and an interesting theory on the Battle of El Alamein.

I had hoped to include another episode from the life of Ken West, direct from the front line as usual but this will have to be left for a later issue. There must be other members with some good service anecdotes. Why not share them with us?

To all those members who will be going away during the next few weeks, we wish you all a



Dear Sir

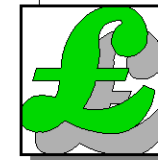
I would like to thank all my fellow members of the Royal British Legion for their kind thoughts and wishes during my stay in hospital.

Special thanks to John Liddell.

Without him things would have been much more difficult. Also to Tom (Ashmore) for reporting it in the first place.

Bless you all.

JOHN BALLARD.



## Subs to Rise

**GEORGE FLEMING**, our treasurer, informed the last branch meeting that subscriptions will be increased for next year by 50p. The

new rates are: Affiliation fee £7.50, Branch £1.00, making a total of £8.50 per member. A new member will pay a further £2.50 joining fee to cover the cost of his/her badge. Members who pay by direct debit will have the extra sum deducted from their accounts next September. Ω



REPORT ON SUNDAY MORNING SESSION by Betty West

Having finally received confirmation that the Branch had indeed been awarded the Certificate of Merit — Lister Cup, it was proposed that the Chairman and Secretary attend that part of the three-day Annual Conference in Bournemouth when award presentations are made. We accordingly set out on Saturday 26th May with plans to be present at the morning session on Sunday 27th from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm.

This was probably the first time in the history of the Branch that Market Harborough had been represented at the Annual Conference, and certainly neither the Chairman nor Secretary had ever attended a Conference of this magnitude. The Bournemouth International Centre seemed to be full of smart, be-medalled Members and, when seated, the 700 plus delegates filled the main part of the Hall.

Your Chairman was initially on the stage, awaiting the presentation and I was in the large balcony as a 'guest'. You would have been proud to hear the name of Market Harborough ring round the Hall and the highlights of our application read out as the citation to worthy Certificate of Merit Winners:

Annual Conference 2001 BOURNEMOUTH 26th –28th MAY

Only 114 Members but 30 events organised and £33,000 raised for the Poppy Appeal over three years; £354 raised in Pedal to Paris...

The Chairman received the framed Certificate, words of congratulations and was photographed before leaving the stage. Other presentations were made and it seemed the large majority of these went to Northern Ireland and Suffolk (see photo in May/June issue of Legion magazine.

The business of the morning concerned the Accounts to September 2000, addressed by the General Treasurer, with questions from the Delegates on clarification of such matters as insurance costs; Women's Section accounts; advertising revenue from the Legion Letter and Business Loans. This was followed by the continuation of voting on Conference Motions. I was surprised by the ferocity of the arguments; the queues of Delegates to speak For and Against and the speed and efficiency of collection and counting votes! The official report will be available later but some items which took my attention during those three hours were:-



The Millennium Poppy Appeal had surpassed its £20m goal by reaching £20,197.55 up to that morning. Accordingly the targets for the next three years will be £25m!

The cost of administration in 1985 had been calculated at 7p in the £1 and was now 8½ p.

70 — 80 Business Loans were processed each year with only a small proportion having to be written off

The HQ Legion Letter was costing more than £800,000 to produce and this was after advertising revenue had been deducted — and not half as informative as In Touch!

Business then continued from the first day and, following voting on a further three Motions which included some very heated debate on the proposed revisions to the Charter, the Secretary General gave a short address. He referred to Branches having difficulties appointing officials and talked of a possible single Membership category as being one way to cut the administrative burden of Branches.

In conclusion, I must say that the Chairman and I found our attendance at the Conference most interesting and enlightening and would recommend a short visit to any Member, if only to appreciate the important role we all play in such a large charity organisation. One final comment, I was disappointed that the morning session did not start with the Act of Homage to remind us all why we were there (no doubt they would argue that Standards, Dedications etc are



## Notices

### BEAUMANOR HALL 7 JULY

Earlier interest has faded and it now looks as though our only representative will be Standard Bearer George Fleming. However, tickets are still on sale at the HDC Offices, Adam & Eve St.

### HARRINGTON MUSEUM—16 JULY

We meet at the Museum at 1.55 pm. Details are enclosed for the 12 people whose names were on the list. If anyone else wishes to join us please call Tom Ashmore MH 433108.

### NEWMARKET POPPY RACE DAY—4AUG

All 39 seats on the coach are now taken and most people have paid. A reminder is enclosed for those who have not! The coach leaves MH bus station at 08.00 hrs and there will be a stop in Newmarket town.

### COSFORD & BLISTS HILL—8 SEPT

More details will be available at the July meeting which we hope will prompt a few more people to sign up so that a coach can be booked and definite arrangements made.

Ω

**STOP  
PRESS**

## Courage

AT 2359 hrs GMT, on 22nd June, 40-year old ex-SAS Boat Trooper, Peter Bray was due to set out from Newfoundland, in his attempt to become the first person to paddle a kayak solo and unsupported across the North Atlantic. Through County Chairman, Jim Rowlinson, who is much involved in this project, we wish Peter well. Ω



## Diary

Reminders for July with some other dates to keep free. (see also page 10)

- 7 Jul Concert/ picnic—Beaumanor Hall
  - 11 Jul Branch Meeting + Quiz.
  - 16 Jul Covert Warfare Museum, Harrington.
  - 25 Jul Branch Committee Meeting
- 
- 4 Aug **Newmarket—fully booked**
  - 8 Aug Branch meeting
  - 8 Sep Cosford & Blists Hill Museums
  - 25 Sep Lunch at Countryman, Gt. Bowden
  - 12 Oct Annual Dinner - M H Golf Club
  - 10 Nov Remembrance Band Concert (see p8)

## Meetings

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

The next meeting is on 11TH JULY and will be followed by a Quiz.

The Branch Committee meets on the **Last Wednesday** of each month (except December).



# The Royal British Legion

Reg. Charity 219279

## Market Harborough Branch



Founded in 1923

# In Touch

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JUNE 2001

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