

For Your Diary

- 27 Sep Branch Committee meeting
30 Sep End of RBL year
1 Oct **Subscriptions due** at start of new RBL year
8 Oct *Husbands Bosworth trip to Blackpool
11 Oct Branch AGM & Buffet
13 Oct Annual Dinner (see p 17)
25 Oct Branch Committee meeting
28 Oct Poppy Appeal Coffee Morning
Harborough Theatre
28 Oct Poppy Appeal House to House & Static Point collections start.
4 Nov Remembrance 2000 at the de Montfort Hall
6 Nov Start of Branch Millennium Week.
Garden of Remembrance Opening Ceremony
7 Nov Poppy Appeal Stall in Market Hall.
8 Nov Branch Meeting and Presentation of Books of Remembrance (see p2)
10 Nov Poppy Appeal Stall in Market Hall
11 Nov Remembrance – Welland Park and 11-11-11 on the Square.
Poppy Appeal Stall in Market Hall
Concert by Harborough Band
12 Nov Remembrance Sunday Parade, Service & wreath laying
12 Nov Poppy Appeal Stall at Sunday Mkt.
17 Nov *Husbands Bosworth Annual Dinner
Date TBA Branch Committee meeting
13 Dec Branch Meeting + social event
15 Dec Christmas Dinner (details later)

* Details from Mr.N. Greenfield on MH 880719

Annual Dinner

**Market Harborough Golf Club
Friday, 13th October. 7.00 for 7.30**

If you have not yet put your name down for the Dinner, (and the names of any guests you will be bringing) you can still do so by phoning Bob England on MH 464288. The list will close on Sunday, 8th October.

Please indicate menu choices i.e.

Starter (A) Vegetable Soup
(B) Melon & Pineapple Cocktail

Main Course (C) Fillet of Salmon
(D) Roast Beef Chasseur

There will be Sorbet as a second course and a choice of sweets or biscuits & cheese to finish.

Please pay (£13 per head) by 11th October.
Cheques payable to Social Committee a/c.

Meetings

Regular 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 October and is the AGM at which your Officers and Committee are elected. Please endeavour to attend. Nomination forms sent out last month should be returned by 8th October. There will be a Buffet.



Reg. Charity No. 219279

**The Royal British Legion
Market Harborough Branch**

Founded in 1923



In Touch

Issue 27

September, 2000.

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<http://www.mktharborbl.ukvet.net>

Editorial

You will see on the front of this issue that **In Touch** has a new Editor. Ray Tyler has decided that for a number of reasons he wishes to resign from the post but Bob England has volunteered to take on the job. For this issue and to cover the transition, I, Tom Ashmore, have taken on the role. I must thank Ray for helping to maintain the success of **In Touch** and I wish Bob good luck for the future.

This column is being written after attending the Battle of Britain Service at St. Dionysius Church – Market Harborough's reminder of those momentous weeks 60 years ago. One hopes that the ATC cadets, looking so smart as they marched with their Band, felt proud to wear the uniform of the young men and women of whom Churchill said, "Never in the long history of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

We add our tribute to the RAF with an article about a unique Battle of Britain memorial and a remarkable development in the story of the Lancaster which crashed at Foxton in 1945. Ω

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Normandy, September, 2000.

by Bob England

Nine members and guests of the Royal British Legion went on a trip to France on Sunday, 3rd September.

After a somewhat lengthy journey of nearly 11 hours, we arrived at our destination of St. Valery-en-Caux in Normandy. We were delighted to discover that we were staying in a beautiful modern hotel at one end of the town, which overlooked the marina across the road. St. Valery-en-Caux is a lovely little town and was a riot of colours with beautiful flower beds in profusion even at this end of the year. It is only half the size of Market Harborough.

On Monday we had a really full day. We set off for Bayeux, where some of us went to view the famous Bayeux Tapestry, while others explored the town and cathedral. From there we travelled to the D-Day beaches and made a stop at Omaha beach and the American War Cemetery, which was really impressive and overlooking the beach just below.

Mr Stan Snow made the visit so much more thought provoking and poignant by giving some of us an eye witness account of that momentous day. It brought home to us to a much greater extent why we were there and how much we owe to our Forces and the price that was paid by so many.

From there we went further down the coast to Arramanche, though we did not have time to go inside the D-Day Museum which is there. We saw what remains of the famous Mulberry Harbour and it really must be seen to appreciate the size and scale of this almost unbelievable

project. Here also was a large plaque to commemorate Brig A. B. G. Stanier Bart. D.S.O, M.C. who had lived in East Farndon.

From here we travelled on to Pegasus Bridge and had coffee and drinks at the now famous house that was the first to be liberated during the D-Day invasion. This was choc-a-bloc with souvenirs of the war and letters from all over the world. Well worth a visit.

On this day we were "out" for over 11 hours!!!

Tuesday was the day for a trip to Giverny to see the home of Claude Monet and the gardens he made so well known via his paintings, which some of us (or maybe just me) found a bit disappointing.

Wednesday was spent exploring St. Valery-en-Caux and we found the British War Cemetery just on the edge of the town. Mr Tom Jeacock had taken some crosses to place on a few of the graves. This is a small cemetery with no chapel and is the resting place of French and British soldiers, together with a dozen or so Canadian, Polish and Czech from June 1940. The visit of Market Harborough RBL members was duly recorded in the visitors' book.

On Thursday we set out for home only to run into the farmers' blockade of the entry to the Channel Tunnel. Our driver took us to Calais ferry port and we returned by sea.

Everybody in the party expressed their enjoyment of the trip, and for my part I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone in our party for their excellent company, good humour and warm companionship. It was indeed a good holiday. Ω

News

Congratulations, Andrew! It must have been a thrill for you and all the other Pedal to Paris entrants to reach the Arc de Triomphe on Sunday, 10th September after the long ride from Greenwich. Let us hope your sponsors have made your effort worthwhile. No doubt you will be delighted still to have a call (on MH 434805) from anyone who has not already promised a donation.

September Branch Meeting. This was another well attended occasion, with 36 members present – over a third of the 107 total membership. Six recently joined members were presented with their membership badges and officially welcomed to the branch with applause from all present. Following the business session, some points from which are reported separately, several members attempted the two quizzes which had been set. Scores achieved have not been released for publication!!

Social Events. The number of members taking part in most of the events arranged by the Social Committee remains disappointingly small but those who do take part say how much they have enjoyed occasions like the recent Skittles evening and the RAFA Quiz night. The lunches and evening meals have been better supported. Outings such as the visits to Winchester and Duxford have required "roping in" people from outside the branch to make them economically viable. What should be done? Let us have your criticisms of past events and ideas for the future. Newer members, your views would be particularly welcome. And it would be good to have some "Letters to the Editor" to get the discussion going.

Two Important Meetings

The Annual General Meeting is on 11th October, a month earlier than usual to avoid conflicting with the Millennium events. The importance of the AGM is that it allows you to influence the future conduct and success of the Branch by who you elect to run it. Don't miss that opportunity!

The Branch Meeting on 8th November (at 7.30pm at the Conservative Club as usual) is when the Books of Remembrance will be presented as a gift from the Branch to the people of Market Harborough and the Bowdens, represented by the Council Chairman and other appropriate guests. It is important for as many members as possible to be present to emphasise the significance of the event.

Even if normally you cannot get to meetings please make a special effort to attend both of these. If transport is a problem please ring Betty West (MH 434923) who may be able to help.

Poppy Appeal Appeal!!

At the recent branch meeting the Chairman asked for volunteers to help with the tremendous amount of effort involved during the Poppy Appeal period. Tom Jeacock, our Poppy Appeal Organiser needs people for House to House collecting from 28th October; delivering poppy trays and collecting boxes to these collectors and to shops, pubs, offices, schools and other "static points"; collecting in the streets on the licensed days and to man the stall in the Market Hall (on 4 days this year). Ring Tom on MH 466829).

Please spare a few hours of your time and also try to recruit others from outside the Legion.

Error could be the cause of the crash and that they were approaching runway 3.

After Foxton we visited East Kirkby the home base of 630 Sqd. Back in London I went to the Public Records at Kew and obtained copies of the Operations Record for 8/9 April 1945 for both East Kirkby and 14OTU. The entry for 14OTU stated that there was no contact with the aircraft prior to the crash. We have obtained a copy of the crash from the RAF Museum. This states "aircraft returning from operations was diverted to another airfield. Aircraft acknowledged diversion and while proceeding to diversion airfield aircraft flew into the ground". The findings of the inquiry were "that the cause of the accident was due to the wireless operator in failing to receive diversion by wireless". The base commander did not accept this finding. "AOC this command considers accident due to Error in Judgement on behalf of the pilot". I understand this type of a decision occurred often when all the crew are killed.

I am writing to Air Historical Branch (RAF) asking for more details, mainly to determine the name and location of the diversion airfield. I was led to believe that it may have been 14 OTU at Foxton and I am sure Colin would not have attempted a landing without obtaining permission to land from the tower and checking his altimeter for the height of the airfield or changes to the barometric pressure. In Colin's time in the RAAF he had made 340 night landings in Cranes, Oxfords, Wellingtons and Lancasters including 16 months as an instructor at 15(P) AFU and he had some 1310 flying hours in his logbook. It is interesting to note that East Kirkby was 40ft above sea level while 14 OTU was 400ft above sea level. I will let you know any details I can find out from Air Historical Branch (RAF).

Colin's name is on the Honour Roll at Plymouth

and his name is also in the records of the War Graves Commission. I was told at East Kirkby that Australia would not permit the release of the names of next of kin to protect the family. Other countries permit the release of these details. I have photos of the graves of the four crew members buried at Botley. They are together in a group at the front of the cemetery.

If you would like more details re F/O C. Richardson please let me know. He joined the RAAF in October 1941, received his wings at 10 SFTS Duphin, Manitoba in September 1942, then he went to the UK.

By the way I bumped into your web page when I entered Lutzendorf into the Yahoo search engine trying to find out where the target was in Germany. I didn't find the answer but I did find your site.

Regards

Clive Henderson crhendo@smatchat.net.au

Mark replied

Dear Clive.

I have forwarded your letter to our Vice chairman who is also online and I hope to contact you again as soon as I can with a more sensible letter after I have got settled down. *(after the excitement of receiving the e-mail - Ed.)*

Anyway once again thank you for contacting us and I hope that you found our site of interest and that we have helped you as much as you have helped us.

Cheers for now, Mark R Hudson

From our own check of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, we know the names and home towns of the six Australians and now hope Clive Henderson can help in the search for relatives or others who knew them. Ω

radar installations, airfields and aircraft factories. Realising that their objective of achieving air superiority over the South East in four days had failed they again switched the emphasis elsewhere.

On 15th September, the Battle reached its climax when 20 squadrons engaged the German bombers and fighters, downing 60 aircraft and damaging 25; the RAF lost 26. The battered Luftwaffe accepted defeat by the RAF Fighter Command and this victory marked the turning point in the Second World War.

Visitors to the site at Capel Le Ferne can walk around the arena and contemplate those whose bravery and sacrifice contributed to the saving of our country in her hour of need. There are, on a fine day, stunning views across the Channel over which much of the Battle was fought. At the visitors' centre, Hunting Lodge, light refreshments are available together with an interesting range of souvenir items. There is ample parking and the charge is £1 per car; coaches are free. Toilet facilities, including those for the disabled, are provided.

Visitors have access to the Memorial at any time but the facilities are open from 1st April until 31st October each year. Hours: 1100 until 5pm daily, but closing time in Autumn is earlier. For further information, telephone the site during their open hours, on 01303 249292 or after hours, 01303 276697.

The nearest station is Folkestone and there is a bus service which covers the one and a half miles to the site. By car, the Memorial is approached from either Dover or Folkestone via the B2011.

This article is reproduced from a section of the Web site www.Spittfire-Museum.com of The Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial at RAF Manston. This excellent site has a wealth of other interesting and informative sections.

The Foxton Crash and M H RBL

The August Issue of *In Touch, Too*, promised you the full story and it starts with Branch member, Stan Woofenden's long-standing interest in the fatal crash. Having obtained a good deal of information about the plane, its mission and the names of its seven crewmembers, six of whom were Australian, he was anxious to contact any surviving relatives or comrades. Could the Internet help?

A message circulated on the Legion Electronic Mailing List, yielded several replies expressing interest, offering suggestions or asking for help with respondents' own quests, but no real leads. Mark Hudson put an appeal on the Branch website but again no leads..... until this e-mail,

This aircraft was piloted by my wife's brother F/O Colin Richardson. He was with 630 Sqd. Based at East Kirkby, Lincolnshire.

Over the years we had understood the aircraft crashed at Folkestone. Prior to a visit to the UK in June of this year I got interested in finding more details and went for a search on the net and came across ... quite a bit of information identifying the crash site as Foxton, Leicestershire. Foxton and Folkestone don't sound all that different when you come from the other side of the world.

During June we visited Foxton and met Rev. Ian Johnston, a kind and compassionate man who showed my wife, Nan and myself, the site of the crash and the site of the airfield that was 14OTU on Foxton Moor. Since returning we received a touching letter from Ian which I will answer. He gave us a book "The Foxton Story" by Derek Lewin which mentioned ND949. I was disappointed to read that he stated that Pilot

Poppy Appeal Coffee Morning

Being held at the Harborough Theatre on 28th October, it effectively launches this year's Poppy Appeal Collections and is an excellent incentive to do even better than previously. As usual, helpers and items for the Cake, Tombola, & "For Sale" stalls and prizes for the raffle are needed. Please bring your contributions on the day or call Bob England on MH 464288 if you need help.

Our Millennium Week

"For Your Diary" on page 16 shows what a busy time 6th to 12th November will be, and it will be a unique opportunity to put the RBL and the Branch in the public eye. But to be successful, help and support will be needed from many members.

Meanwhile, preparations continue. Details of the Opening Ceremonies for the Garden of Remembrance have been finalised, a grant for the cost of the flagpole has been obtained, Volume 5 of The Books is in progress and tickets for the Band Concert are being printed.

Canal Trip

It was said at the September Branch meeting that this outing, fixed for Tuesday, 19th had fallen victim to the fuel crisis, but in the event, it did take place much to the relief of Alec Taylor who had generously offered to take members on his boat and of those who had wished to go. Thank you Alec for giving everyone such an enjoyable day. Ω

The Capel Le Ferne Memorial to the Battle of Britain

A striking memorial to those who flew and those who gave their lives in the Battle of Britain stands on the White Cliffs between Dover and Folkestone at Capel le Ferne. It is an ideal location and one which was all too familiar to both the RAF and the Luftwaffe during that desperate summer of 1940.

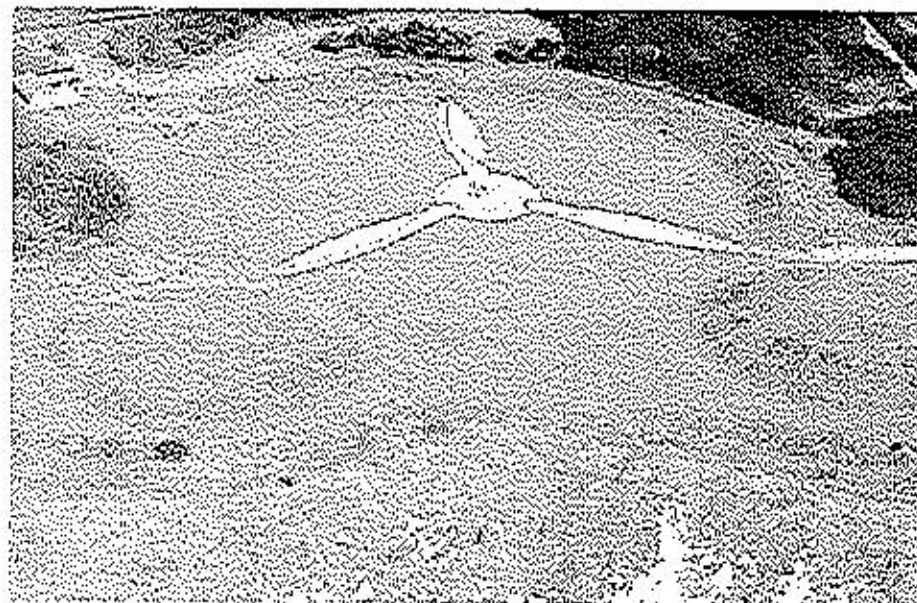
The Memorial

The Memorial consists of a pilot in a thoughtful mood, gazing out across the Channel, thinking of his friends long overdue on their return, and of his next sortie. He is seated on a sandstone plinth on which are carved all the crests of the squadrons which participated in the Battle.

The stone figure is located at the centre of three propellers, each 38 metres long, cut into the chalk cliff and set within a spectacular grassed arena.



Background to the Memorial



Wing Commander Geoffrey Page DSO OBE DFC served in 56 Squadron. On 12th August 1940, during the height of the Battle, they were scrambled and attacked a formation of Dornier 17 bombers escorted by Me 109s; the KG2 Luftwaffe Squadron outnumbered them by 9 to 1. Geoffrey Page's Hurricane Mk II, P2970 US-X, received several direct hits and, having baled out from the blazing inferno into the Channel a few miles north of Margate, he was eventually rescued. After two years recovering from his

horrific injuries under the care of Sir Archibald McIndoe, he returned to fly and fight again. He received further injuries when he crash landed his Spitfire close to the bridgehead at Arnhem, which ended his wartime flying.

His vivid memories inspired Geoffrey Page with the idea that there should be a permanent, national reminder of the Battle. He set about leasing the fine cliff top site from the local authority, who owned land, formed a Trust to create a memorial and threw his energies into this exciting but daunting project. His dream was realised when on July 9th 1993, it was opened by Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth.

Britain Prepares for Invasion

The Battle of Britain was the last major conflict to take place over British soil. In May and early June of 1940, huge quantities of equipment had already been destroyed or abandoned during the Battle for France. The Royal Air Force had already lost 931 aircraft, 453 of which were Hurricanes or Spitfires. Britain, ill prepared for an invasion, was galvanised into action and, on the other side of the Channel, Hitler waited for surrender.

By July, Hitler grew tired of waiting and planned the invasion of Britain. German forces of 60,000 men were to be landed along the coast between Brighton and Folkestone. He planned to commence the invasion on 21st September and expected to have captured the whole of Kent by October 1940.

The Battle for air superiority over the Channel began on 10th July. By August, having suffered many casualties over the sea, the Luftwaffe shifted emphasis and concentrated on mainland

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