

# In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996



## The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219270

Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve

### Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

90 years of caring in the  
local community



Other's Festive  
Fare (p ??)

With thanks to Prime Life  
Ltd, parent company of  
Peaker Park Care Village  
Market Harborough, for  
printing this issue.

Issue 183

December 2013

### Next Monthly Branch Meeting

7.30 pm Wednesday 8 January

No committee meeting in January

Function Room, Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

## Branch News

### Christmas Message from you Chairman

As 2013 draws to a close, we look back on a year of solid achievement with your committee under the Chairmanship of John Standish providing a good mix of after-meeting events and public activities- coffee mornings, Armed Forces Day and Poppy Appeal - well supported by local people. My hope is that we go into the new year determined to build on this foundation, to increase our membership and to support the RBL Four Pillars of Comradeship, Welfare, Representing the Service Community, and Remembrance. This last Pillar will be highly significant in 2014, a century since the start of WWI. So I wish you all a very Happy Christmas, wherever and however you spend it, and look forward to seeing you at our first meeting of the year on Thursday 9 January.

### Editorial Christmas Greetings

After twelve months with a new occupant of the Editor's Chair, special thanks and Seasonal good wishes are due to the contributors for their interesting stories and to readers who have given support and encouragement. We must also say how grateful we are to Prime Life Ltd and their Amanda Ackerman for producing the paper copies since June.

## Picture of the Year



Children of C.of E. School having placed their poppy crosses by the Memorial Gates on Armistice Day.

### Remembrance Concert

This annual event was performed as usual by the Harborough Band in the Baptist Church. The programme of easy listening music also included 'Sing-a-long' items in which the audience gave voice. The short act of remembrance, with Standard Bearer and cornet players sounding the Last Post high above the pulpit, added a note of solemnity to the occasion.

Sadly, we report the death of Sidney Jackson who died on 12<sup>th</sup> November aged 78. Fellow Branch members were amongst those who attended his funeral on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Poor health had prevented him coming to Meetings for several years but he maintained an interest in the Branch and Legion.

Cover Photo  
Copied from blogspot.com

## With all the Trimmings Christmas Fare from Around the World

Although Roast Turkey is seen as the traditional ingredient of the main Christmas meal in many English speaking countries, goose and duck are sometimes used. Less usual birds like quail, popular in some American



ptarmigan

states, and ptarmigan is eaten in Iceland. When meat is preferred, the most popular is pork. In Norway pork belly roasted to produce a crisp crackling, is accompanied by sauerkraut but cured leg of pork with a ball of Edam cheese wrapped in red wax, is a Philippines dish. Pork leg slow roasted is served with a filled maize dough wrapped in banana leaves would be on the table in some Honduras homes. A large Christmas ham is served smorgasbord style with bread in Finland and gammon steak is quite usual in Iceland.

Roast beef does not appear to as a Christmas favourite, but caribou is in Greenland as is elk in some parts of the USA. Curried goat can be part of the festive meal in Jamaica and reindeer is another Icelandic choice. What some indigenous people of Greenland regard as a delicacy, whale skin filled with a strip of blubber.

In mainly Catholic countries, the main meal is on Christmas Eve, usually eaten after a late Mass. Fish is then the basic ingredient but the kinds of fish and how it is cooked differ widely. Central European countries favour carp and roast, fried and stuffed varieties are found. Salt cod is used in Spain and in Portugal where it is boiled. In southern Italy, fried eel finds favour and in Poland and Sweden herring served in wine or cream sauce is found. Oysters are the main Christmas dish in some households in Virginia, USA.

Amongst the many alternatives to our 'Plum Pudding' are sweet breads like the lemon flavoured, fruited Panettone in Italy and the German Stollen filled with brandy-soaked raisins, currents and cherries. In



German Stollen

In the Canary islands they have flaky pumpkin turnovers filled with sweet potato and in Colombia a crisp fried yeast dough drenched in honey or syrup. The Dutch like marzipan baked in puff pastry brushed with apricot jam. A butter-cream filled sponge cake rolled and decorated to resemble a log is a French desert.

### Sources.

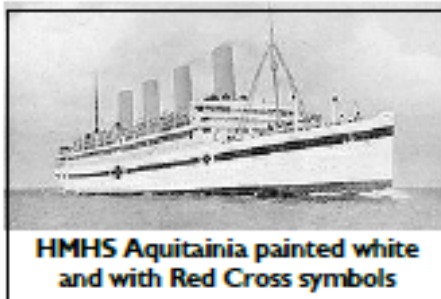
[www.whychristmas.com/cultures](http://www.whychristmas.com/cultures)  
[www.travelsort.com](http://www.travelsort.com)



## How I spent Christmas

Edited extracts from notes written in December 1915 by Ambulance driver Holley Ashmore (the Editor's father) serving at Mudros, on Lemnos, an Aegean island base for the Gallipoli Campaign.

On Christmas day we were extra busy as we had to take patients from the several hospitals here to the pier for embarkation on the *Acquitania*, now a hospital ship, for repatriation to Britain. This job is a much brighter one than taking them to the hospitals as they arrived from the field of battle as they are hoping of being very shortly home.



**HMHS Aquitania painted white and with Red Cross symbols**

The *Acquitania* accommodates large numbers of patients (*it had 4,182 beds*) so it is a great task to get them all aboard. The men have to be moved many times, first of all to be made ready to travel in the Hospitals, then they have to be embarked on the Ambulances and prepared for a short rough ride to the pier. There they are disembarked from the Ambulance and taken to the Embarkation medical tents awaiting transfer to a Red Cross Lighter. This plies back and forth to the hospital ship, taking something like three hundred patients each time. Meanwhile we are still taking the men from the hospitals so the work goes on and on from 6 am to 9.30 pm.

I did get a bit of breakfast about 7 am, a piece of bread and bacon under my thumb with a little tea. Then on the go till 2.30 pm when I am relieved to get a bite of dinner but when I get back to our Camp I find that I and a pal are the last to arrive so there is very little left which is stone cold and consists of one potato, a small rough piece of meat and a small piece of pudding.

It is then back to the ambulance, working until 7.30 pm without a break before returning to camp to find there is no tea left for me. At a neighbouring cook-house I beg a drop of tea and a

piece of bread and cheese but before I could get it eaten an order came to take a sick man to Hospital. It is 9.30 pm before I return to camp where all the boys are making merry with their issue of two pint of beer per man which was enough to liven up their spirits until about 1 am next morning when we had a few hours sleep until 6 am before getting up to go through yesterday's routine again.

*Editor's footnote This exceptionally busy period was following the first evacuations of allied forces from Gallipoli marking the end of that unsuccessful Campaign. For more about Holley Ashmore's time at Mudros visit [www.greatwaranddad.net](http://www.greatwaranddad.net).*

## **My Christmas Grand Prix**

### **Reminiscences of an aged Road Runner**

On a recent, rare visit to London, I was renewing my acquaintance with well-remembered areas from the top deck of buses. After travelling along Whitehall my bus was held up for nearly ten minutes by the traffic lights at Trafalgar Square. My mind went back forty years; well, it's easier than trying to remember what I did yesterday!

Back in the early Sixties I worked from The Scotsman newspaper office in Fleet Street. The paper was sold every day in the London area by street vendors, station bookstalls, shops and hotels. Supplies were brought from Edinburgh to Kings Cross by overnight train, arriving about 6.30am, and a team of drivers collected copies for their daily delivery runs. When I first started on the job, my run took me to London Airport (as it was then known) dropping off supplies en route.

At Christmastime, the English newspapers were not published, unlike those in Scotland. This is not to suggest that the Scots were any less enlightened or spiritual than their neighbours south of the border - and they did make up for lost time with an extra bank holiday at New Year. So, our jolly team of deliverers gathered at Kings Cross on Christmas

morning as on any other weekday through the year. This would have been a somewhat wasted effort, of course, if, as in these days, railway services had packed up on Christmas Eve. In those far off times the overnight express would steam in after its four hundred mile journey and on board were hot-from-the-press supplies of The Scotsman dated 25 December. Increased quantities were printed and extra sales outlets arranged to satisfy the insatiable appetite of the English and, of course ex-patriot Scots, for the latest news.

So, back to my thoughts on that recent visit. The capital is now a twenty-four-hour city with many shops staying open all night and bus services running almost as frequently as in daytime. It is difficult, if not impossible, therefore, to visualise the centre of London completely devoid of traffic, but I am able to recall just such a situation.



At around seven o'clock on a 1960s Christmas morning, drove up Whitehall and around Trafalgar Square in my trusty Hillman Husky at forty-odd miles an hour, with not another vehicle in sight!

*George Seward, then Editor, wrote this for the December 2004 issue*

## A Wartime Christmas

An unusual festive duty recalled by Dick Fulford

Christmas 1940 - Aboard HM Yacht 'Sister Ann' moored at the entrance to the River Fowey.

My first draft and introduction to the Royal Navy, after 3 months of initial training. "Sister Ann" was the floating office and Wardroom of the Parent Ship for Coastal Forces Flotillas. Commander White RN Retired (very much retired) was the Captain; a very kindly old man whose one and only hobby appeared to be alcohol. I was asked if I could use a typewriter. It was unwise to say "No" to any task in the Navy, so I was allotted my first sea-going job, to produce Christmas cards for the Captain. Someone had sent him a greeting card, and being 1940, when times were hard, it was of a basic standard and old Daddy White was eager to get it copied for his family and friends. So, armed with sundry sheets of Pusser's toilet paper, I began one of my first naval duties typing for the Captain on each sheet the following Christmas Greeting

*Economy must be our watch-word this year.  
Hard times we've undoubtedly got 'em.  
So please accept this to wish you 'good luck'  
Which I do from the heart of my bottom..*

It is fortunate for me that no grandchild has yet asked "What did you do in the war Grandad?"

From In Touch December 2003

## Miscellany



So who posted on Wikileaks what we are delivering?

1. Why was the Egyptian boy confused?



2. What is Santa's favourite pizza?



Father Christmas goes down the wrong chimney

3. Why did the golfer wear an extra pair of trousers?

Answers on page 7



Market Harborough Royal British Legion/Royal Naval  
Association/Royal Air force Association

### **Late Christmas Lunch**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January at the Angel Hotel – 12. for 12.30  
£12.50 – **pay on the day**

#### Menu

*Chicken Liver Pate with chutney and rustic bread*  
*Melon and Orange segment cocktail with fruity sorbet*  
*Homemade tomato and red pepper soup with rustic bread*  
*Prawn and Crayfish Marie Rose on crispy lettuce and crouton salad*

\*\*\*

*Roast Turkey with traditional festive trimmings*  
*Fillet of white fish on a bed of fried potato with a chunky leek sauce*  
*Slow braised nugget of beef in a rich red wine and root vegetable gravy served on  
mashed potato*  
*Vegetarian Option*

\*\*\*

*Traditional Christmas pudding with Brandy Sauce laced with candied fruits*  
*Cherry Bakewell cheesecake with ice cream*  
*Fresh Fruit Salad with fruity sorbet*  
*Fruity Meringue Roulade with Fruits and cream*

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Tea or Coffee

Menu Choice by 30 December to  
Pat Middleton 01858 445827  
Betty Ramsay 01858 434923  
Margaret Cator 01858 432023

To cancel a booking you must  
phone The Angel (01858  
462702) before 10 am on the day  
or you will be charged.

#### **Other Christmas Lunches?**

Two cannibals were sharing a meal together. One says to the other, "I don't like my mother-in-law." The other cannibal replies, "Just eat the vegetables."

First soldier: 'Pass me the chocolate pudding, would you?'

Second soldier: 'Certainly not, it's against regulations to help another soldier to dessert.'

Riddle answers 1. His daddy was a mummy 2. Deep-fan, crisp and even.  
3. In case he got a hole in one.

## What's Going On?

### Forthcoming Events

2014

- 4 Jan County conference  
Wigston Elms Social &  
Ex-Service Club. 2pm.
- 7 Jan Late Xmas Lunch - see  
menu on Page 7
- 9 Jan After meeting event
- 22 Feb Branch Coffee Morning -  
Harbrough Theatre
- 22 Mar Anniversary Dinner at  
M H Golf Club

#### Late Extra

Congratulation to 1084 Squadron  
Air Training Corps cadets for their  
top award in the National ATC  
Marching Bands contest on 24  
November.

#### Welfare

If you are aware of any one who  
qualifies for, and may benefit from  
The Royal British Legion welfare  
services please contact  
**Betty Ramsay**  
01858 434923

#### In Touch Next Month

A new front page, 'Consequences',  
'Remember this?', News, etc.

*The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Market Harborough Branch. The editor reserves the right to decide what is to be published and to edit material submitted. No part may be reproduced without prior permission. (Answer to puzzle on page 8 is 'Nothing')*  
The newsletter is online at [www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough)

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#### Branch Website

[www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough)