

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279

Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

91

Years of Caring



**2014: WWI
Centenary Year**



Tyne Cot Cemetery visited - see p5

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

Issue 192
September 2014

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm **Wednesday 8 October**
Committee **Wednesday 1 October**

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

BEWARE OF THIS SCAM

of which I have been a victim and the Police are now aware. If a young man calls at your door saying that he did work for you and that he now wants payment, do not pay him however persistent and plausible he is. Tell him you are going to ring the police and then do so as I have done on the last two occasions. Twice previously I was uncertain whether the work had been done and foolishly paid in cash.

Editor

Branch News

August Branch Meeting

Held in the residents' lounge at Peaker Park, it was the first brief part of a joint social event. Music by two kilted pipers (branch member Graham Prior and a colleague from



Chairman, John with partner, Lily

the Northampton Pipe band) was followed with entertainment by a singer. The tempo prompted some members to informal dancing

between the tables of the dining room. As usual, the kitchen staff had provided an excellent buffet

Another Social Occasion

Two weeks later some members were at Peaker Park again enjoying their Cocktail and Barbeque party. Entertainment was provided by a keyboard player and two male singers



Dancing Joan Ashmore brings a smile to one of the residents.

performing mainly old-time pieces and also by impromptu dancing by two branch members.

September Lunch at the Angel

The best attendance for many months with 31 people present required the use of the attractive large dining room.

RNA Coffee Morning

Several branch members attended to support our Naval friends. Sea Cadets took an active part by manning stalls.

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Cover Photo

Tyne Cot Cemetery - provided by Sir Michael Carlton-Smith with his article, 'A Pilgrimage to the Front Lines'.

Remember This?

The Unsung Heroes

by Bob England

Think about the Crimean War (1853-56) and one instantly brings to mind the Battles of Balaclava and the Charge of the Light Brigade, Alma and Inkerman. But there were also some heroes who are rarely mentioned or even known of. In 1854 as the Russian Winter set in, Lord Raglan's forces were laying siege to Sevastopol and the only road to the harbour was becoming virtually impassable and supplies were getting desperately short. Troops were getting hungry and medical supplies were low.

A member of Parliament, Martin Peto, who was also a railway builder, and his brother-in-law, together with a Mr. Brassey, offered to build a railway to supply the troops at no profit to themselves.

They proposed a team of 250 navvies, 30 gangers and masons, 80 carpenters, 20 blacksmiths and 10 engineers. All these were to be formed into a Civil Engineer Corps.

Parliament agreed and the party left Liverpool on December 21st. They were followed by 23 other ships carrying more men and supplies to Balaclava. They took everything they needed: cranes, pile-drivers, picks,

shovels, ropes, rails, wagons and engines. The rigours of the Russian winter were nothing new to many of the navvies, who had come fresh from building railways in America and Canada. In the first ten days they had built an encampment of wooden huts and laid five miles of track. Within six weeks they had laid a double track line from the harbour to the hills overlooking Sevastopol. Including branch lines to outposts, the total length of track totalled 29 miles. When completed it was handed over to the Army.

The trains, drawn by horses, steam engines and stationary engines hauling wagons by wire ropes, carried 112 tons of food a day, plus ammunition and medical supplies.

By April Lord Raglan's army was saved, and in September the Russians withdrew from Sevastopol.

A keen stamp collector, Bob tells us that the Crimean War is to be commemorated with a set of stamps being issued by the Royal Mail on October 12th.

From ***In Touch*** Issue 72,
September 2004.

A Pilgrimage to the Front Lines

By Major General Sir Michael Carleton-Smith CBE,DL.

As the ferry enters the port at Calais, one sees at the end of the pier on the starboard side, a lone stone cross.



Each May a party from the Royal Green Jackets attend a service there to remember their brother riflemen in the Queen Victoria's Rifles, The King's Royal Rifle Corps and the Rifle brigade who fought and died there to defend Calais and prevent the German panzer divisions disrupting the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in 1940. Penny and I are regular attenders and meet up with six to eight French Colour bearers, the Mayor of Calais, the British Consul, buglers, a regimental Padre and about

sixty mostly retired members from the three former regiments. It is a moving and memorable occasion.

Also this year Penny and I repeated a commemoration trip to Ypres where my father was badly wounded 99 years ago, shot through the neck by a German sniper. He was a regular subaltern in the King's Dragoon Guards, which had come from India in the Lucknow Brigade of the First Indian Cavalry Division. He recovered, though was paralysed down his right arm, but this did not hinder him from serving in the Third Afghan War in 1919 and being involved with the Jedburgh agents of SOE (Special Operations Executive) in the Second World War, for which he was awarded the Croix de Guerre, the Légion d'Honneur and the American Medal of Merit. Penny also had two twenty-year-old uncles killed at Arras, one of whom had already served in Gallipoli where one of my great uncles had been killed. None of these young uncles have known graves.

We arrived in Ypres in time to attend Evensong in St George's Memorial Church with the walls packed with regimental, formation, individual and even school memorials. A plaque outside the entrance reads:

*Ye who would enter here to worship God
Think of your brothers who before you
trod*

*This hallowed ground and did not grudge
to give*

*Their lives in war that you might live
Ask for a heart to follow their way
Of sacrifice and duty. Rest and pray.*

We twice attended the historic Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, sounded every night at 8.00pm since 1928. We were in the company of



about a thousand people on each deeply moving occasion. We visited cemeteries and memorials immaculately maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, whose regional offices we visited in Ypres to discuss the only exception we found. I had spent two years on exchange with The Rifle Brigade's famous allied regiment the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and we found their memorial at Frezenberg, which they will visit on the centenary of the battle next year, to be in need of attention. We were reassured that 'it's all in hand'.

Many of the identical white unnamed gravestones have 'A soldier of the

Great War' and beneath a cross, is engraved – 'Known unto God'. There are many moving inscriptions below the regimental badge on the named gravestones.

Rifleman J. Taylor's gravestone, died 31st July, 1915, has the wording:

*'Roses may wither,
leaves fade and die.
Friends may forget you
but never shall I.'*

The big memorials list those who have no known grave; 54,900 on the Menin Gate and a further 34,888 at Tyne Cot all from the dreaded Ypres Salient. The town, with its beautiful 13th Century Cloth Hall, was almost totally destroyed in four years of shelling and was memorably restored after the war and is today a charming little Belgian town with a complete replica Cloth Hall containing 'The Flanders Fields Museum'.

We also visited 'Toc H' (Talbot House), the well reserved little town house behind the lines in Poperinghe ('Pops'), where the Reverend Tubby Clayton set up his Rest Centre, with a simple chapel in the attic, redolent with heartrending memories. There was the inscription,

*'There are many kinds of sorrow
in this world of love and hate.
But there is no sterner sorrow
than a soldier's for his mate.'*

Hilary's Spoon

an email to the Editor

I was wondering if you could help me... I have a spoon given to me many years ago from my paternal grandmother who thought it was a relatives from the war... Which war I am unsure!!! If I send you photos could it go into In Touch as a question???? It's of no real sentimental value to me but it maybe for someone???



Editor replies: The letters LEIC indicates that the spoon belonged to someone in the Leicestershire Regiment and 704 will be his regimental number. Leicestershire Regiment database identifies him as Pte Growdrige who served in the Boer War in the first Battalion. Why the number in front of LEIC is a 3 (or 5?) is a mystery but could be explained if he became a Territorial whose battalions were 3 and 5. So the spoon may have been use in South Africa and in France.

Has anyone any other ideas?- Editor

Miscellany

September Snippets

1914

Recruits not in barracks to get 2 shillings a day for board & lodging.

1915

Stonehenge with surrounding 60 acres of downs sold for £6,600.

1916

British secret weapon, code named 'Tank', in action for the first time.

1917

Impressionist painter Degas died at age 83 after 10 years of blindness.

1918

Purchaser of Stonehenge presents it to the nation.



I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury.
- Groucho Marx

Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was SHUT UP.
- Joe Namath

Other Events in which you may be interested

'The Hired Man'

A tribute to those who served in the 1914-18 war performed by the Market Harborough Musical Theatre. It is set in Cumbria in the first quarter of the 20th century, against a background of hiring fairs, whippet racing, drinking, colliers and union meetings, at Market Harborough Theatre from Tuesday 7th-Saturday 11th October. Tickets are available from the Sugar Loaf.

Funds for the RBL will be raised during the week of the show.

WWI Commemoration events in Hallaton

from 1st to 7th November, include talks by the well known author Richard van Emden and Robin Jenkins of the Record Office and a concert by the Harborough Band. Supper is available at each event. The Editor has details of dates, times, prices and order forms

Legion News

The Legion has scored second place in the annual Charity Brand Index in which respondents were asked to give their impressions of charities they were aware of, their relevance, whether they trusted them and how likely they were to donate to them.

In top place was Cancer Research UK. Help for Heroes was ninth.

LUNCH

AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

7 OCTOBER *MEET IN THE BAR AT NOON* MENU

Salmon supreme sat on mash potato with tarragon hollandaise sauce

Supreme of British chicken sat on mash potato with a rich chunky tomato sauce (gf)

Tangy quorn sausage & potato casserole (v)

Roast leg of lamb with roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding & gravy
All served with a selection of vegetables

Summer salads (Home cooked ham (gf) or prawn Marie Rose (gf) (v)) with warm new potatoes

-/-/-/-/-

Banoffee cheesecake with clotted cream ice cream & fresh banana

Chocolate, caramel & flapjack brownie stack with jug of cream & compot of morrello cherries (v)

Fresh fruit salad with fruity sorbet
-/-/-/-/-

Finished off with either fresh tea or coffee with chocolate mints
£8.50 - pay on the day

To book, ring Les Moore (01858 463112) before 27 September. To cancel ring The Angel (01858 462702) before 10 am on the day or you will be charged

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 21 Sep RAFA Battle of Britain Service
Little Bowden Church 10.45am
- 27 Sep RNA visit to National Memorial
Arboretum. If you wish to go,
ring MH 465502
- 2 Oct 7.30pm 'Pack up your troubles'
at The Curve, Leicester. £15
- 4 Oct Poppy Appeal Coffee Morning
@ Harb'ro Theatre- Helpers &
items for stalls needed
- 8 Oct Branch AGM & buffet
- 25 Oct De Montfort Hall Festival of
Remembrance. £15 @ box
office
- 25 Oct 11am Poppy Appeal Launch

Welfare

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

RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days
a week on Freephone **0800 802 8080**
for advice and support for serving &
ex- service people and dependents.

In Touch Next Month

'Stay Where You Are', Centenary
Snippets, 'Remember this?', News, etc

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