

# In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

## The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279



### LIVE ON

To the memory of the fallen and the future of the living

**92**

Years of Caring



### Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

### Centenary Year of 1915



Uncle George  
was awarded  
one (page 40)

### Next Monthly Branch Meeting

7.30 pm **Wednesday 8 April**

Committee 1<sup>st</sup> April

Issue !98  
March 2015

Function Room, Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

## Branch News

### February Branch Meeting

A good turnout of 38 Members heard reports of the successful Scouts Affiliation evening; that printing of In Touch would no longer be done by Prime Life to whom a letter of thanks had been sent for having done so for the last 20 months; that Members who received a copy (particularly by post) would be encouraged to receive this electronically in future, if possible, to save cost; that some sort of possible commemorations for VE Day on May 8<sup>th</sup> /VJ Day 6<sup>th</sup> August was being considered; that the Secretary had met with Susan Grogan, TRBL Advice & Information Officer, at the Symington Building. She was there every other Monday and was receiving enquiries through the Central Contact Point; that there were now 159 Members with six lapsed Memberships, five deceased Members and 1 new Member transferred in; that the Poppy Appeal total had now passed £30,000 which, although including some £3,000 from Kibworth, was still an increase on the previous total; that 24 persons had enjoyed the February Lunch at the Angel.

### After Meeting Event

Ten members each read one or two poems from the following selection, chosen by Betty Ramsay and Tom Ashmore, some well known, others not so and of different length, seriousness, date, authors and origin. How many of these do you know or have read or even heard of?



**Veterans Day  
The General  
Base Details**



**Final Inspection &  
A red red rose**



**Sam Small &  
Old Airfield**

**In the Church Yard  
& Play up and  
Play the Game**



**A Smile for You &  
The Cricket Match**

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Cover Photo

The Mons Star (and ribbon). Awarded to those who served in France and Belgium in 1914

## **Remember This?**

Extracts from March 1997 Issue 6 of the then bi-monthly *In Touch*

### **An Old War Horse**

by Bill Cotton

Having read recently that the Royal Yacht had steamed a million miles in her life of 40 years or so, I reminded myself of a ship in which I served during World War II, HMS Faulknor. She was built in 1936 as a flotilla leader, one of the first ships to be built for that purpose. From the outbreak of war in 1939 until July 1943 she had steamed over 250,000 miles without a major breakdown, thus saying a lot for British shipbuilding. The Faulknor escorted convoys to Russia & Malta, did covering work for the landings in North Africa and other landings in the Med. On D Day she was placed at the disposal of Monty and was called Monty's Taxi. After further duties in the Atlantic she took the initial surrender of the Channel Islands. In 1945 she was laid up in the River Dart. On her last voyage from Plymouth to Dartmouth she made 36 knots; good going for an old War Horse who never let the Navy down.

*The above was the first of many contributions Bill made to In Touch, all interesting and some amusing often recalled from his remarkable memory. With his death on 26 January the Branch has lost a most valued Member.*  
Editor

### **From Meetings you may have Missed**

Advance arrangements are already well in hand for the Dedication of the New Standard on 8th June. Twenty five invitations have been sent to County and Local Dignitaries and so far we are pleased to have had acceptances from the Deputy Lieutenant (Colonel Wilkes), the County President (Lt. Col. Roffey), the County President of the RBL Women's Section (Lady Martin) and the County Chairman (Mr A. Griffith). A sub-committee of four has been formed to plan the Ceremony.

John Cox has taken on the responsibility of organising coach trips in 1997. His proposed outings are to Cosford Museum, Gloucester Docks, Middle Wallop Museum and Duxford Air Show. . . . .

At the February meeting we welcomed a new member. . . . .  
so the total membership now stands at 86. (About half the 2015 total Ed)

At the County Conference contact was made with the County Recruiting and Youth Officers and the County Field Officer each of whom said he would give a talk at a branch meeting.



## ***Uncle George*** from Marion Vine

I was brought up hearing numerous stories about Uncle George who was killed in action in August 1918. His only child, Mary, was born 4 months later. She later served as a teleprinter operator in the VAAF during WW2. I was her next of kin & when she died at the age of 92 (4 years ago) I found the following photos & article from Uncle George's teacher training college magazine amongst her possessions. He was 28 when he fell – the same age Christopher (my son) is now. What a dreadful waste of potential.

### **Article in Culham Club Magazine December 1918**

GEORGE ALGER (09-11). Killed in action in France, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

It is hard to believe that our sadly extending Roll of Honour now contains the name of one who was so buoyant with life, energy and good spirits. Wherever he went he was certain to make his mark, and his associates in every sphere of his many activities will more than keenly regret his untimely death.

He joined the L.R.B. as a private at the outbreak of the war, and was soon "sent across," eventually becoming the recipient of the Mons Star. Early in 1915 he received a shrapnel wound in the heel, which



necessitated a long convalescence, during the latter part of which he did splendid work at Blackdown as a sergeant instructor of physical training, endeared himself to all who were committed to his care, and was the recipient of several presentations. He was again put on draft this year, being posted to the 8<sup>th</sup> London Regiment (Post Office Rifles), and had only returned to France a few weeks before he fell – and one here may quote the words of a comrade – "dying a hero's



death, as he was leading his platoon into action."

George was a prominent sportsman, playing for the First Football and First Cricket Elevens at Culham, and later played for Leytonstone and Tunbridge Wells F.C.s. As a forward he will be long remembered for his prolific goal scoring.

He was appointed to Kirkdale Road Council School, Leytonstone, in 1912, and became the idol of his scholars not only in the classroom but also by his ever-willing assistance in training the boys at cricket, football and sport.

On the concert stage he was in his element, and it is the opinion of many good critics that in this sphere he was on the high road to fame. George had but to face his audience and then his laughter-provoking talents were given full play, for nearly all his patter was quite extempore and spontaneous.

His death is a cruel blow to his personal friends, and especially to his family circle, where his widow and parents command all our sympathies in their great sorrow.

It remains a great privilege to many of us to cherish the happiest memories of dear old George. He was large-hearted to a degree, sympathetic to the weak, an embodiment of healthy activity in himself, and shed the radiance of his happy good nature wherever he hearty laugh was heard.

## *The Post Office Rifles*

Collaboration between the Post Office and the Army has a long history. For example Volunteers went to Paris in 1816 to assist British Forces with communications following the defeat of Napoleon, and sorters also served in the Crimean War (1853-1856).

The first formation of a group of Post Office volunteers, of 1,600 Special Constables, was set up to safeguard installations under attack during bombings in London and Manchester in 1867, carried out in the name of Irish Independence. The following year a regiment of 1,000 men was formed from Post Office employees as the 49th (later renumbered 24th) Middlesex Rifle Volunteers (Post Office Rifles).

Men from the regiment served in the Egyptian and Sudanese campaigns of 1882 and 1885. During the Boer War, the 24th Middlesex contributed 16 officers and over 1,000 men of other ranks to oversee a comprehensive effort of wartime communications.

Though the regiment was relieved of its postal duties after the Reforms of 1908, postal workers joined the Territorial Force under its new title '8th (City of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Post Office Rifles)'. (George Alger's unit).

## WW1 Army Postal Service

Responsible for army mails in all theatres of war, the APS not only handled mails between Britain and the forces abroad but coordinated communications between units at



the front.

With the onset of trench warfare, all mails bound for troops on the Western Front were sorted at the London Home Depot by the end of 1914. Covering five acres of Regents Park, this was said to be the largest wooden structure in the world employing over 2,500 mostly female staff by 1918. During the war the Home Depot handled a staggering 2 billion letters and 114 million parcels.

*Taken from The British Post Office Museum & Archive Website*

## Miscellany

### March 1915 News

- 1st Women's Army Battalion created
- 10th British take Neuve Chapelle
- 14th RN sinks German battleship in Pacific
- 16th Jockey Club will not suspend race meetings for the duration.
- 20th Russians capture Memel
- 26th "women will have men's pay for war work"



The Pharaoh who chided his people on their morals was named King Tut-Tut.

If we are not allowed to covet, what will become of the economy?

Company Chairman's statement  
'We are proud to report that we created no Toxic waste this year. We managed to incorporate all our Toxins into our products.'

'I'm in the computer business. I manufacture 'Out of Order' signs'

*With acknowledgements to Bob Thaves*



Continued from page 2

### The Goalie with the outstretched hands



If



### The Village Blacksmith & All for the want of a Nail



### Valentine & Daffodils



### Down Below & The Salmon Saga

Although the reading of poetry was something different and unusual, the event was regarded as a success.

### Branch Coffee Morning

There was a good supply of items for the stalls manned by St John Ambulance and ATC Cadets and with Sea Cadets in the 'galley'. With support from Members as helpers and 'customers', members of the public were able to enjoy their visit, resulting in £306 being raised for Branch funds.

## LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

**7 APRIL**

**MEET IN THE  
BAR AT NOON**

### MENU

Trio of Grasmere Farm Sausages  
Served on Bubble and Squeak Draped  
in Onion Gravy (gf)

Supreme of British Chicken Sat on  
Mashed Potato draped in a Smoked  
Bacon and Leek Sauce (gf)

Roast shoulder of Pork  
with roast potatoes, Yorkshire pud-  
ding & gravy (can be gf)

Mushroom and Walnut Hotpot with  
Mash Potato and Jug of Gravy (v)

All served with a selection of vegetables

- - - - -

Fresh fruit salad with Ice Cream (gf)  
(v)

Jam Roly Poly & creamy custard (v)

Fruity Roulade with Fruits & Cream  
(v)

- - - - -

Tea or coffee with chocolate mints  
**£8.50 - pay on the day**

To book, contact Kathie Morley, email  
kathiemorley@talktalk.net or phone  
01858 419714 -before 28 March.  
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 Mar** Anniversary Dinner at M H Golf Club.
- 8 Apr** Branch meeting + talk 'War & peace in the Holy Land.....by Sir Michael Carleton-Smith
- 18 Apr** RNA Coffee Morning at MH Theatre
- 13 May** Branch meeting + talk 'war Memorials at Risk Project by Denis Kenyon
- 10 Jun** Branch meeting + talk by Susan Grogan, Advice & Information Officer
- 28 Jun** Armed Forces Day Event- Welland Park

#### 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

'Gallipoli Landing on V Beach',  
Miscellany, Remember This?, News, etc.

### Branch Contacts

#### Chairman

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#### Branch Website

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

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