

# 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



### Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

### Centenary Year of 1915



SS River Clyde  
100 years ago  
see pages 4-6

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Wednesday 13 May**  
**Committee 7 May**

Issue 199  
April 2015

Function Room, Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

## Branch News

### March Branch Meeting

It was reported that the March lunch



was attended by 29 people creating a bit of a problem to seat them in the normal 24 seat dining room. The lunch in May will be a special event to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day at which RAFA and RNA members and others will be invited. For the VJ Anniversary, an event will be held near the Memorial in Welland Park. Details will be available later. With the serious decline in the membership of Husbands Bosworth Branch, it has been proposed that it would merge with Market Harborough. A Special General Meeting will be held at which our members can formally accept the merger. The Poppy Appeal team are arranging a visit to Ypres, of which details will be given later. The Chairman of PrimeLife Ltd has been thanked for having In Touch printed at no cost to the Branch. As from March, it is being done at the Parish Church office, and in colour at an acceptable cost.

### March 'After Meeting' Event

Paul Stammers of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust gave an illustrated talk about the 'Osprey Project' in which he is much involved at Rutland Water and at the migration areas of West Africa. The osprey had not been resident in England for 150 years and about 19 years ago it was decided to try to establish a 'colony' at Rutland Water. Paul described what had been involved and its success in now having several individual birds



which migrate to Senegal and Gambia and return two years later. Their

flights out and back are tracked using small transmitters which they carry. To study where they go to, Paul has made a number of visits to West Africa and the photos he showed illustrated the very different surroundings from their Rutland home.

Paul was thanked for this most interesting talk, which was much appreciated by members, and for answering the resulting questions.

#### Cover Photo

From a photographic print by artist Robert Hunt published on the Internet. The source of the original photo is not stated.



## Remember This?

### Another Web Award

Congratulations, Mark Hudson on being author and Webmaster of "a best military website", an accolade awarded by the US based military.com. You won't be able to wear the medal, but the Branch website can display the 'gong' for the rest of 2001.



### Hospital War Memorial

FOLLOWING THE SECOND team meeting, a Press Release was prepared to publicise the intention of the Branch to take a lead in efforts to ensure that the memorial is suitably preserved. Copies have also been sent to appropriate organisations and individuals. The document carried this picture.

**NOT FOR SALE**



THE NAMES INSCRIBED ON THESE PANELS ARE A RECORD OF THE MEN FROM THE URBAN DISTRICT WHO SERVED IN THE GREAT WAR.

### Links

A Mr MICHAEL MILLS in Peterborough sees a copy of In Touch and writes to the then Editor, Dick Fulford about his research into the fate of crew members of H M Submarine Strategem sunk off Malaya in 1944. Our research for the Books of Remembrance last year reveals that a Market Harborough man, L/Stkr Frankham was on that sub. and Mr Mills' letter is included on Frankham's page in Vol. 5. It is also published on our website and that of the Leicester Submariners. In Perth, Western

Australia, a Mr John Eade who is trying to get information about one of the few survivors of Strategem's crew, L/S Gibbs, finds the letter when "surfing the net" and by e-mail asks for Mr Mills' address. We await the result of linking these two researchers.

The above is scanned from page 7 of In Touch April 2001 and records the Branch initiative to get support to ensure that the Memorial would be preserved. The other item on page 7 was a note of disappointment that only 8 members attended the last Branch pub lunch.

## *The Gallipoli landing on V Beach*

by Lt Commander Josiah Wedgewood MP DSO

transcribed by the Editor from his copy of the Egyptian Gazette of 26 April 1916.

### **Story of the Landing**

"This is my seat in the stalls and there are many in England who would give £100 for it", said the Hon Arthur Coke as he fixed on the site for his maxim casemate on the forecastle of the River Clyde. They were to be a grim sort of stalls, and it cost him his life but it cheered up the mechanics who had volunteered to serve on this old tramp steamer. It was commanded by a half-pay captain who dreamed of lighters, a midshipman of an Adonis-like beauty from the merchant marine, and an engineer from M S River Plate, who would describe with extraordinary zest how he was going to get two extra knots out of the old tub to 'boost' her ashore by sitting on the safety valve. Meanwhile, our mechanics built casemates, armed her with maxim guns and lined her bridges with boiler plate and leaky sand-bags.

On a flawless Sunday morning, April 25, 1915, as the mist rose to circle the bay, we ran ashore 40 yards from

the mediaeval castle of Sedd el Bahr. I never noticed the grounding for the horror in the water and on the beach. Five tows of five boats each, loaded with men were going ashore alongside of us. One moment it had been early morning in a peaceful country with thoughts of smells of cows and hay and milk, and the next, while the boats were just twenty yards from the shore, the blue sea around each boat was turning red. Is there anything

more horrible than to see men wading through water waist-high under heavy fire? You are where the bullet hits the water, which like a nightmare

the man for the next shot, which will not miss. Of all the brave men two thirds died, and hardly a dozen reached unwounded the shelter of the five foot sand dunes.

Then there was a charge by men on 'The Wooden Horse' (as the ship had been dubbed) through the new large ports which had been cut in the lower deck, they ran along gangways to the



Sedd-el-Bahr fort and village seen from the SS River Clyde, during the landing.

bows then over three lighters to a spit of rock, twenty yards over the slippery rocks and there was shelter. I think this was more terrible. In the first rush those yet alive had to land and they repeated these rushes all day. There was no room on the rocks, there was no room on the lighters and the boats; they were so covered with dead and dying. A dash at about 9 o'clock was led by General Napier and his Brigadier.

Would they ever get to the end of the lighter and jump into the sheltering water? No, side by side they sat down on the engine combing. For one moment one thought they might be taking cover; then their legs slid and they rolled over.

It was the Munsters who charged first with a sprig of shamrock on their caps; the the Dublins, the Worcesters and the Hampshires. Lying on the beach, on the rocks, on the lighters they cried at the Mother of God. Even when I looked ashore saw five Munsters. They at some moment had got ashore; they had ben told to cut the wire entanglements; they had left the shelter of the bank, charged fifteen yards to the wire and there they lay

in a row at two yard interval. One could hardly believe them dead. All the time great shells kept hitting the shivering ship and doing slaughter in the packed holds. These shells were fired from Asia but were the maxims and the pom-poms in Sedd-e-Bahr and on the amphitheatre that kept our heads down below the bulwarks and boiler plate? There now as Midshipman Drury swimming to the lighter that had broken down, with



Midshipman Drury's action shown on this plate used in printing a book of WWI Acts of Great Heroim.

a line in his mouth and a wound in his head. If even any boy deserved a VC that lad did. And the was the captain of the River Clyde, now no longer a ship to be stuck to but

a part for ever of Gallipoli alone with a boat by a spit of rock, trying to lift in the wounded under fire.

All these things I saw as in a dream as I moved from casemate to casemate watching to see the Turks, wearing an "Election smile", and trying to pretend in an even voice to men who had never seen death that this was the best of all possible worlds. Columns of smoke rose from the castle and town of Seddel Bahr as the great shells from the fleet



passed over head and burst; and in every lull we heard the wounded. One of my men came to me; "May I go aver and help those wounded? I can't stand their crying". He went with the second lot but another of my men had been before him and he had dived in, without leave. He was shot through the stomach but lives. The Turks could easily have killed all those who went to the wounded. They did not fire, sometimes for ten minutes, and the a burst of fire would come. Then and afterwards, I found them extraordinarily merciful compared to the Germans in Flanders.

At three o'clock we got 100 men alive ashore as great chunks were flying out of the old castle as the 15" shells from the Elizabeth plastered the ten-foot walls. . . . . For three hours I stood at the end of the rocks up to my waist in water, my legs jammed between dead men as I helped men down from the last boat to the rocks. When night came it was then that I learnt the shout 'Allah' as the Turks charged. All night long the battle raged. On shore everyone was firing at they knew not what. Our men went up through the Turks; the Turks came down through ours to the beach.

*Lt Commander Wedgewood continued his long article with equally graphic descriptions of the horrors faced by the troops in the hours following the landing.*

## Miscellany

### April 1915 News Items

- 1<sup>st</sup> Germans sink 3 trawlers in the North sea
- 7<sup>th</sup> UK businessmen urge prohibition of alcohol
- 7<sup>th</sup> US blues singer Billie Holiday born
- 15<sup>th</sup> Lloyd George put in charge of munitions production
- 20<sup>th</sup> US President Wilson urges strict neutrality in the war.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Sheffield Wednesday beat Chelsea 3-0 in Cup Final
- 30<sup>th</sup> Germany invades Russian Baltic provinces

### Battlefield Humour



Officer says, 'You go first Corporal, I'll hold the ladder'

Q. If Bread is the Staff of Life, what is the Life of the Staff? A. One long loaf.

Anzac button :

a nail used instead of a button to hold up one's trousers.

Anzac stew: one rind of fat bacon in a bucket of hot water.

## Fred Brown

We regret to announce the death of this popular member of the Branch and of RNA of which he acted as Standard Bearer. Our condolences are given to his family.

## Anniversary Dinner

Sixty members and guests, including President Andrew Gardner and his wife, were present at what was a



Dinner Dance held at M H Golf Club



on 21st  
M a r c h .  
Tables were  
arranged to  
leave an  
adequate

dance floor on which couples and groups stepped out to the music provided by Dave Hawke after an excellent meal. The Chairman thanked all those who had helped to produce such a successful occasion.



## LUNCH

## AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

**MAY 5TH** ARRIVE FROM  
NOON

## VE Day 70th Anniversary MENU

War time root vegetable soup (v)  
Crusty bead

- - - - -

Lord Woolton pie  
(swede, potatoes, cauliflower, leeks &  
carrots held in a herb white sauce  
topped w/sliced potatoes) (gf) (v)

Beef Bourguignon 1940's style  
(slow stewed British beef & onions in a  
rich braised gravy & roast potatoes) (gf)

### Spam Hash

(cubed spam, potatoes & onion all sau-  
téed together with jugs of light gravy)

- - - - -

Bread & Orchard pudding & custard

Ginger sponge pudding & custard (v)

Yorkshire pudding with  
fruity summer jam

- - - - -

Tea or coffee with chocolate mints

**£9.00 Pay on the day**

To book, contact Kathie Morley, email  
kathiemorley@talktalk.net or phone  
01858 419714 -before 25 April.

To cancel, ring **The Angel** (01858  
462702) before 10 am on the day or  
you will be charged



## What's Going On?

### Forthcoming Events

- 18 Apr RNA Coffee Morning at MH Theatre
- 5 May VE Day 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch
- 8 May VE Day 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event on Square 2.45; Silence 3pm; Tea & coffee at Theatre
- 13 May Branch meeting+ talk 'War Memorials at Risk' Project by Denis Kenyon
- 17 May Spring Lunchtime Party & BBQ at Peaker Park
- 10 Jun Branch meeting + talk by Susan Grogan, Advice & Info.'n Officer
- 20 Jun AFD Coffee Morning - Theatre
- 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

**Harry White**, May 1915 News, 'Remember this?'. News, etc.

### Branch Contacts

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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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