

# 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



The player is  
on Page 4

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Wednesday 9 December**  
**Committee 3 December**

**Issue 206**  
**November 2015**

**Function Room, Conservative Club,**  
**Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough**

## ***Branch News***

### **October Branch Meeting**

In the short general meeting following the AGM, members were reminded of the Poppy Appeal Launch, Peaker Park Fireworks Party, the Swing Night on 7 November (tickets were available), De Montfort Hall festival (there will be a mini-bus), Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service and 11-11-11 events. The Coffee Morning had raised £279 for the Poppy Appeal. 33 people had attended the October Lunch. Several members offered to read poems after the November meeting.

### **2015 Annual General Meeting**

In his report the President said how personally grateful he had been for support received following his wife's death. The Branch had maintained a high profile within the Legion and in the community. Four members held key posts at County level; Vice-chairman, Chaplain and Youth and Training Officers. Locally it had a leading role in the Armed Forces Day events and it kept a watching brief on developments affecting the Cottage Hospital Memorial portico. Mr Granger thanked all, including those outside the Branch, who had contributed to an excellent year. His especial

appreciation of the work of Secretary and Chairman was shown with the presentation of a bouquet of flowers to Betty Ramsay and a gift to John Morley.

The Chairman reported on what he said was a 'good, interesting year'. He thanked Myra Grewcock, as Branch Treasurer/ Membership Secretary, for the 'fastidious keeping of records and accounts' and Tom Ashmore for producing and arranging the distribution of *In Touch*. Betty Ramsay, in her Youth Officer role, was thanked for securing the affiliation of the Sea Cadets and the District Scouts. Branch members and Cadet Units had been involved in the Armed Forces Day but bad weather had marred the event. Rev'd Morley said it had been a privilege to continue as Chairman and to be able to show to others, ours as a Branch whose meetings were so well attended.

The Audited Accounts for the year ending 30 June had been distributed and the Treasurer referred to the various accounts included. By unanimous vote the Accounts were accepted by members.

Reports on Membership, Welfare, Youth, Social and Standard Bearer were included in the Agenda, but arising from the first, it was mentioned that subscriptions could still be paid in

Cover Photo

One of many images of bagpipes and pipers available on the Internet.

## Remember This?

*From Little Acorns* by Hotspur (November 2000)

"It is to mark the Millennium, you know. Various organisations have been allotted their own week to put on a bit of a show. We have got Poppy Week. Anyone got any ideas?"

That was how it all started. As if ordering, distribution of boxes, selling of poppies, re-collecting, totalling up of all the monies and filling in all the forms was not enough, they wanted more -- five days more!

But someone had an idea: A committee of a dedicated few was formed and a plan was made that necessitated an enormous amount of thought, discussion and some physical work. Few could have imagined the size of the task to be undertaken. Uncomplaining, and almost unnoticed, they set about the job of listing all the people of the Market Harborough area who had made the supreme sacrifice in two world wars.

They needed the names, home addresses and parents of these people, together with their final resting places. Research was carried out with the co-operation of the Harborough Mail into the newspaper's archives; through the internet Commonwealth War Graves Commission records were accessed and sources of local history used; from published works;



and from the information and memorabilia provided by local people. Great care was taken to ensure the accuracy of the research. The result - a Roll of Honour in the form of a six volume "Book of Remembrance" presented and accessible to the people of the town.

But that was not all! The Memorial Gardens in the town centre were to be transformed into a Garden of Remembrance, a sort of miniature war cemetery with a new flagpole on which the Union Jack would be lowered each evening in a sunset ceremony. And to round off the week, a Concert would be given by the popular and respected Harborough Band.

They were ambitious plans -- but the committee, with help from a lot of people, succeeded. Our congratulations and grateful thanks must be accorded to the Millennium Committee and all those who worked so hard to make this week the success it undoubtedly was.

They were also expensive plans, but costs have been met fully through generous donations, grants and fundraising. No Branch or Legion funds have been used.

*From the special edition about the Branch Millennium Remembrance Week activities.*

## **Lt Col (Mad Jack) Churchill**

Much has been written about this eccentric, charismatic soldier who served in the British Army before, during and after WW2. Some details vary but all portray him as a fearless, fighting officer who went into action with a longbow and arrows and a Scottish broadsword as weapons and playing the bagpipes.

Born in 1906 into a family that worked overseas, John 'Jack' Churchill went to school on the Isle of Man, then to Sandhurst where in



This photograph was taken late in Churchill's career after acquiring another skill: parachuting and promotion to Lt Colonel. His open-necked shirt suggests it may have been taken when he was in Australia

1926 he was commissioned in the Manchester Regiment which was serving in Burma. There he became a keen, adventurous motor cyclist. He decided to learn to play the bagpipes and was tutored by a piper of the Cameron Highlanders. He developed his skill after returning to Britain to a level which won him

a place in the Aldershot Tattoo competition. A new interest which satisfied his instinct to excel was archery and having left the Army in 1936, he represented Great Britain in Oslo in the World archery Competition in 1939.

When war broke out in September 1939 Churchill regained his commission in the Manchester Regiment which went to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. During its retreat towards Dunkirk, Captain Churchill was in frequent rearguard action when his bravery won him the M. C. However he is best remembered for shooting an enemy soldier with a bow and arrow, the first recorded use of the weapon in modern times.

Safely evacuated from the beaches, he joined the recently formed Commandos and trained in Scotland. Real action followed on 27 December 1941 when, as its second in command, No. 3 Commando successfully liquidated a German Garrison on a strategically important island in Norway. It is recorded that Churchill went ashore from the landing craft playing his bagpipes and the throwing grenades running into battle. For another act of bravery he received a bar for his M.C.

Churchill may have been involved in one of the many (minor?) Commando raids during the next 18 months but in

July 1943, as commanding officer, he led 2 Commando from their landing site at Catania in Sicily with his trademark Scottish broadsword slung around his waist, a longbow and arrows around his neck and his bagpipes under his arm. Later, when



This picture is of training but is typical of other landings led by Churchill with his broadsword.

the allied forces started landings at Salerno, Churchill leading 2 Commando, was ordered to capture a German observation post outside of the town of Molina controlling a pass leading down to the beach-head. With the help of a corporal, he infiltrated the town and captured the post, taking 42 prisoners including a mortar squad and led the men and prisoners back down the pass, with the wounded being carried on carts pushed by German prisoners. For his actions he received the D. S. O.

In 1944 Churchill was in Yugoslavia where he led the Commandos supporting Tito's partisans in the Adriatic. In May he was ordered to raid the German held island of Brač for which he organised a "motley army" of 1,500 Partisans, 43 Commando and one troop from 40 Commando. The landing was

unopposed but the Partisans decided to defer the attack until the following day. However Churchill decided to attack and his bagpipes signalled the Commandos to battle but after being strafed by an RAF Spitfire, Churchill had to withdraw for the night. In the morning the Partisans remained at the landing area; and only he and six others managed to reach the objective. A mortar shell killed or wounded everyone but Churchill, who was playing "Will Ye No Come Back Again?" on his pipes as the Germans advanced but he was knocked unconscious by their grenades and captured.

He was later flown to Berlin for interrogation and then transferred to Sachsenhausen concentration camp That infamous prison was only one more challenge to Churchill, and in September 1944, he and an RAF officer crawled under the wire through an abandoned drain and set out to walk to the Baltic coast. Their luck was not in, however, and they were recaptured near the coastal city of Rostock, only a few miles from the sea. In late April 1945, the prisoners were moved to Niederdorf, Austria guarded by SS troops until replaced by a normal German army unit who released them. After walking for about 150 miles to Verona, Churchill met a U S armoured unit. He was free but frustrated that he had missed so much of the war.

His post-war service was in the

Seaforth Highlanders, and as second-in-command of 1st Battalion, the Highland Light Infantry was in Palestine just before the end of the British mandate. Whilst there Churchill coordinated the evacuation of some 700 Jews from the university and Hebrew hospital in Jerusalem and prevented another Arab massacre.

Later, whilst serving in Australia he added another interest in which to excel - surfing and back in Britain became the first person to ride the Severn Bore.

Churchill left the Army in 1959 after 30 years service in which he had won four prestigious awards and a unique reputation. He died in 1996.

*Tom Jeacock had read about 'Mad Jack' and suggested his story for In Touch. This is the result written by Tom Ashmore based on, and with some extracts from. [WWW.warfarehistorynetwork.com](http://WWW.warfarehistorynetwork.com) and Wikipedia.*

## Commandos

The Army Commandos were formed in June 1940 from an idea of Lt. Col. Dudley Clarke R.A., but it was Winston Churchill himself who actually ordered their formation. The first Commando raid took place only five days later.

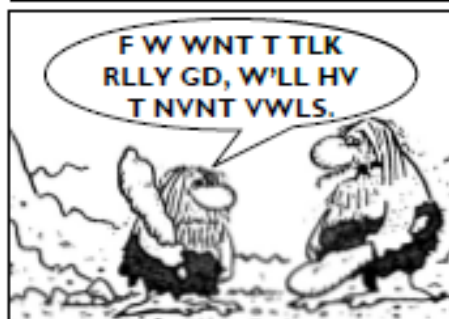
Every man was a picked volunteer selected by officers and trained to the most exacting standards of fitness, discipline and conduct under fire.

For a full account see the veterans website [www.commandoveterans.org](http://www.commandoveterans.org)

## Miscellany

### November 1915 News Items

- 1<sup>st</sup> "There are now 1 million men at the Western Front"
- 9<sup>th</sup> British casualties to date are 510,230
- 11<sup>th</sup> Churchill resigns from government after rows at the Admiralty
- 18<sup>th</sup> New restrictions on opening hours of London Clubs
- 19<sup>th</sup> Married men will not be called up until young single men have been
- 21<sup>st</sup> Austro- German troops now in full control of Serbia
- 29<sup>th</sup> First Women on permanent staff at Scotland Yard



Dictionary definition of vowel;  
Speech sound made with vibration of vocal cords but without audible friction; letter or letters representing this.

I told my girl I had a job at the bowling alley. She said, 'Ten Pin?' I said, 'No permanent.'

I went into a shop and I said, 'Can someone sell me a kettle?' The bloke said, 'Kenwood'. I said, 'Good, where is he?'

cash at the branch if accompanied by the remittance slip from the letter the member received from HQ. From the last, Hilary Brazil was thanked for her work and John Cox for his support. In his **Poppy Appeal Report P A O** David Pryor stated that HQ had confirmed the district total to 30 September was £32,159.78. He and his assistant, Barbara Pickup, were thanked by the Chairman on behalf of the Branch.

### Election of Officers and Committee Members

Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer/Membership Secretary were returned unopposed. There had been no nomination for Vice Chairman and the Office is now vacant. The existing Committee and three new members were elected. The new Committee is; Brian and Janet Lee, Colin and Pauline McIntire, Pat Middleton, Kathie Morley, Barbara Pickup, David Pryor, Brian Thomas & Pat Walker.

President, Andrew Granger and Vice Presidents, Constance Halsall and Mark Hudson remain in those positions.

**Conference Delegates.** The Branch will be represented by Brian Thomas at County and John Standish at TRBL Annual.

The Chairman's Objective for the coming year was a growing, active membership maintaining the Branch position in the community.

The evening ended with members enjoying this wonderful buffet.



### Lunch at the Angel

Many of the 30 mainly regulars there on 3rd November made their selection from the circulated December Menu. For others who might wish to attend there is an abbreviated version. For details and to order contact Kathie Morley (see p8).

Main Course selection;  
Roast Turkey, Vegetable Tart, Baked Salmon, Roasted Beef, Supreme of Chicken, Vegetarian Lasagne, all with 3 vegetables.

Dessert Course selection;  
Christmas Pudding, Chocolate Torte, Fruit Salad, Strawberry Compote, Meringue Roulade.

Coffee or Tea, mint, £ 9.25

## What's Going On?

### Forthcoming Events

- 9 Dec Branch Extraordinary General Meeting to Elect a Vice Chairman - Nominations  
Please to Secretary - followed by the normal Branch meeting + a Quiz & a talk by Glen Iliffe about a name on the WWI memorial
- 5 Jan Xmas lunch with RAFA and RNA
- Thurs Branch Meeting + Event  
Jan 14
- 20 Feb Coffee Morning @ Theatre
- 19 Mar Branch Anniversary Dinner @ Golf Club

#### 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 0808 802 8080 for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

#### In Touch Next Month

'Asbestos Hands', Remember This? (from 2003), News, etc.

### Branch Contacts

#### Chairman

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#### Vice Chairman

Position Vacant

#### Secretary, Welfare & Youth

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#### Treasurer & Membership

##### Secretary

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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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