

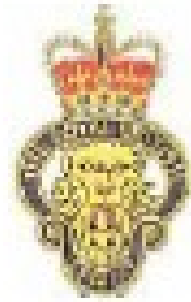
InTouch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

Issue 209
February 2016

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279

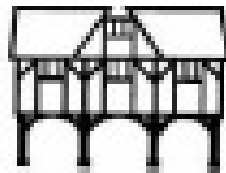


LIVE ON

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

93

Years of



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1916



What is
amusing
them?

See photo
on p4

Next Monthly Branch Meeting

7.30 pm Wednesday 9 March

Committee 3 March

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Branch News

January Branch Meeting

Attendance small probably due to bad weather. New Year greetings from the Chairman. Report on County Conference (see p7). £1100 from General and £400 from Social Accounts given to Poppy Appeal. Peaker Park news - Phil Wright had moved but Branch members still welcome to their social events. The new membership system was giving problems especially with Renewals so latest date for payment extended to end of March. Poppy Appeal income about £5000 down on this time last year. Explorer Scouts used for some House to House collections. Training courses were available for various Branch roles and should be attended by those involved. New items of RBL clothing now available. Ideas sought for changes to the format of Armed Forces Day on 26 June. The late Xmas lunch had been enjoyed by the 38 Branch, RNA and RAFA members present. Following our successful applications for County Awards a case is being made for an Award at National Conference.

After Meeting Talk

Although scheduled to be given by the leader of our affiliated Sea cadet unit, TS Fernie it was given impromptu by the Chairman when the speaker did not arrive (due to last minute

difficulties). Rev John Morley spoke about his connection to the Sea Cadets through being their Chaplain here and previously. Locally, he had been involved with early attempts to start a new unit and saw how the first



cadets were attached to the Hinckley unit. Their activities appealed to them and encouraged them to get their

friends to join. Quite quickly numbers increased to that required to become independent and at a special service and event T S Fernie was formed. The name is from HMS Fernie a WW2 ship funded by donations from the people of the Market Harborough area. As an active unit the cadets became affiliated to our Branch and have helped at coffee mornings, took part in the Armed Forces Day Event and the Remembrance Sunday Parade in which theirs was one of the four cadet unit Standards carried.

Applause at the end of the talk showed how much it had been appreciated.

Cover Photo

Taken on 29/8/1988 on Kapas Island by Capt Yusof of Brigadier General Yahya (on duty!) and Joan looking at Tom climbing a rope.

Remember These? (From February 2007)

This is from Limassol Branch and is passed on by Tom Ashmore, who keeps us in touch with the RBL worldwide.

Army Official Voice Mail

(allegedly emanating from a Royal Navy owned computer, somewhere in the

Thank you for calling the British Army. I'm sorry, but all of our units are out at the moment, or are otherwise engaged. Please leave a message with your country, name of organisation, the region, the specific crisis and a number at which we can call you. As soon as we have sorted out the Balkans, Iraq, Northern Ireland, marching up and down on bits of tarmac in London and compulsory Equal Opportunities training, we will return your call.

Please speak after the tone, or if you require more options, please listen to the following numbers:

- If your crisis is small and close to the sea, press 1 for the Royal Marines.

- If your concern is distant, with tropical climate and good hotels and can be solved by one or two low risk bombing runs, please press '#' for the Royal Air Force. Please note that this service is not available after 1630 hours or at weekends.

- If your enquiry concerns a situation which can be resolved by a grey funnel, some bunting, flags, a damn good cocktail party and a first class marching band, please write, well in advance, to The First Sea Lord, The Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, London SW1.

- If your enquiry is not urgent, please press 2 for the UN Rapid Reaction Corps.

- If you are in real, hot trouble please

press 3 and your call will be routed to Sandline International.

- If you are interested in joining the Army and wish to be shouted at, paid little, have premature arthritis in both knees, put your wife and family in a condemned hut miles from civilisation and are prepared to work your b*ll* off daily, risking life and limb in all weathers and terrain, both day and night, whilst watching the treasury erode your original terms and conditions of service, then please stay on the line.

Your call will shortly be connected to a bitter passed-over Recruiting Sergeant in a grotty shop behind the railway station.

Have a pleasant day and thank you again for trying to contact the British Army."

This Certificate is awarded to

George Fleming

*in recognition for all his hard work,
dedication and commitment to work
within the County over many years
in the true Legion spirit of
Service, Not Self*

County appreciation for George's

Picnic on the Beach

by Joan and Tom Ashmore

The itinerary said 'visit to resort on Kapas Island.' What it did not say was that we would be accompanied by a Brigadier General, a major, a captain, a sergeant, two corporals and 12 other ranks. Neither did it mention that we would be taken to the departure point in a civilian car lent by the Brigadier's friend and followed by a staff car and driver with the other officers and then by an army van with soldiers. Waiting ready to take us to Kapas were three Army assault boats and troops from the large parked army lorries.

Kitted out with life jackets, we set off



at speed. The sea was calm and we went round the island and landed on a sandy beach. I had dressed with my swimsuit on, so quickly stripped off and was first into the water. I noticed I was getting a very severe stinging sensation and, when Tom joined me, he agreed that this was so. When Yahya and Yusof and Isau came in they agreed it wasn't the right place to swim. Yahya thought that it was tiny insects coming out of the sand and climbing on the body. They certainly hurt. So it was back into the boats and round to the other side, after

Yusof and Major Isau had been sent to investigate. Here we found a few basic chalets, a small restaurant (the itinerary's resort) and quite a lot of tourists' boats coming and going.

We were given cold drinks. They carry round a huge army hay box which is very effective and then some noodles. There was also coffee. Tom and I thought this was lunch but it was merely a coffee break though by that time it was after midday. After more swimming and chatting Yusof found a rope (hanging from a tree) and climbed to the top. Tom not to be outdone had to see if he could do this. To the accompaniment of much cheering and hand-clapping, he did so. Yusof made him hang there whilst he took

a photograph. Coming down though, he bruised and grazed his foot. We went for a walk with Yahya. He inspected the restaurant, very basic as were the chalets but one could stay there

for about 10-14 dollars a night per person £2.20 –£3.10. Yahya talked to the young manager about clearing up the litter and, before we left, he got the soldiers to pick quite a bit of it up and bury it. We left about 3.40, a little



Tom rope climbing

bit late and the tide was turning. It was a very rough and exciting ride back and we got soaked .

We first met Yahya over 30 years previously when, as an officer cadet in the British Army at Sandhurst Military Academy, he stayed with us for a few days but we did not see him again until we arrived at his home. *He came out to greet us, all smiles. Gave me a big hug and Tom a very warm handshake.*

In the intervening years, Yahya had risen through the ranks and in the post-independence Malaysian Army was in charge of a multi-arm Task Force dealing with Vietnamese illegal immigrants. After interception and vetting they were accommodated on



a fairly remote island until they could be found a place willing to take them.

The itinerary mentioned at the beginning of this story had been prepared at the command of General Yaacob, the Chief of Army (G O C) who had also been one of the Sandhurst cadets who stayed with us in the early/mid 1950s. Yaacob, or Jack as we knew him had

arranged for us to tour most of mainland Malaysia staying with, or visiting army units varying in size from Division HQs to platoon bases. If he saw this as returned hospitality, it was exceedingly generous.

One of Jack's staff officers, Captain Yusof, was to act as tour guide and mentor and given a staff car and driver. He had to liaise with our may hosts and as far as possible stick to the itinerary! The details of our daily activities were meticulously recorded by Joan in a diary and which forms a major part of this article (*with quotes printed in italics*). Joan continued her pages for Monday, 29th August (1988) with

We got back about 4.30. Had a coffee served in the room, showered and went to bed. 5.50 came very quickly. We were up again and this time joined by another officer. Yusof as always in attendance. Off we went, two cars, two drivers to beyond Rantau Abang to Major Osman's Unit, part of Task Force VII at Dungun. We got there when it was almost dark. Tried to take the scheduled boat ride, but the tide had turned and we were in danger of landing on a sand bank. We returned and went onto the Major's houseboat which had been a Vietnamese immigrants' boat. He has been having it altered so that his men can use it for recreational purposes, and it can be used to entertain visiting VIPs.....The table was laid, the beer and soft drinks came out and the food arrived. Two huge plates of curry,

which were continually changed so that they were always hot, two fish dishes, chicken, salads and of course



masses of rice. Later we adjourned to an open landing stage where we had coffee and fruit. This was a lovely evening.

We then went to a Motel to rest whilst we waited for the turtles to arrive.... After a very difficult walk through trees and deep sand onto the beach we found quite a crowd round one turtle. They would not part for the poor animal to see the sea and it was going round and round, not easy when you are as huge as they are. Eventually there was a lane made for it and it headed for the sea. Further up the beach we saw one that had just laid and was burying her eggs. She was



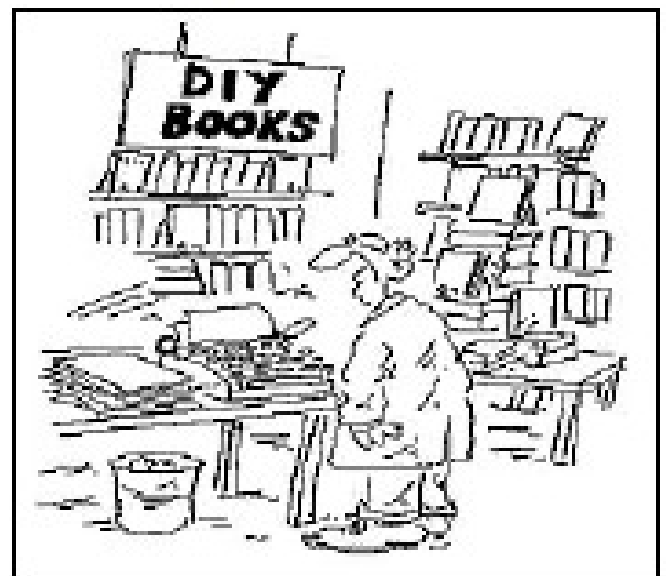
very tired and had to stop to rest several times on

its walk to the sea. Once they are in the sea, they go off very quickly. Turtle eggs are a delicacy and some are taken to the hatchery where we saw the tiniest of turtles..... then it was back to Yahya's at the end of a very full day.

Miscellany

February 1916 News Items

- 8th Food shortages in Berlin cause riots
- 9th General Smuts to command UK & South African troops in East Africa
- 13th Government to recruit 400,000 women to till the fields
- 15th Royal Proclamation bans paper & tobacco imports
- 17th Government appeals against the use of cars for pleasure
- 21st Intense German bombardment of French defences at Verdun
- 22nd Ministry of Blockade created



- February Traditional Days
- Candlemas Day 2nd
 - Pancake Day is Shrove Tuesday (9th in 2016).
 - Valentine Day 14th
 - Kissing Friday of Shrove Week
 - Thinking Day 22nd
 - Leap Year Day 29th

County Conference

Held at the Loughborough Grammar School on 9th January, the event was poorly represented by branches with only 21 delegates and visitors. Market Harborough is exceptional in its support of the County, providing Chaplain, Rev John Morley, Vice-Chairman, John Standish, Youth Officer and Conference Committee Secretary, Betty Ramsay, Training Officer, Hilary Brazil who was also one of only 3 Branch Standard Bearers at the Conference. As became clear when agenda item 'Awards' was reached our Branch is recognised as 'the best' and received the Jack Quain



Trophy for Endeavour and the Ron West Shield for Efficiency.

The well produced agenda included Officers' reports and showed that the meeting followed



Delegate Brian Thomas receives the Shield from President, Col Martin

the usual procedure with address by the President outlining his view of the

last year in the Legion and reports by the Chairman, Acting Treasurer, Area Manager and a Membership Council representative. Following these and other reports and discussion arising from them, it was stated that following concern about the new Membership Renewal System, loss of membership will not occur if subscriptions are paid before the end of March. Arrangements had now been made for space in VSL building in Leicester as a County Office and call in centre. David Atterbury was resigning as Chairman and so Vice Chairman John Standish would take over until the election next January for which branches should submit nominations.

LUNCH

AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

1 MARCH MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON

As those at the February lunch made their choices from the full menu, for others here is a shortened version; Roast Loin of Pork, Supreme of Chicken & casserole, Vegetarian Risotto or Cod on mash potato. Chocolate Cheesecake, Bakewell Tart or Crème Brulée,

For details & to book, contact Kathie Morley, kathiemorley@talktalk.net, or phone 01858 419714

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

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 20 Feb Branch coffee morning @ theatre. Helpers and items for stalls, please
- 9 Mar Branch meeting + talk on Leicestershire Regiment by Dr John Sutton
- 19 Mar Anniversary Dinner Dance @ Golf Club 7pm for 7.30
- 13 Apr Branch meeting + event TBA

Welfare

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

RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week on 0808 802 8080 for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

In Touch Next Month

Miscellany, Remember This?, News, etc.

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Branch Website

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough

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