

# 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

### 93

Years of Caring



## Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

### Centenary Year of 1916



Back in the  
family after  
nearly 50  
years

Pages 4 & 5  
explain

### Next Monthly Branch Meeting

7.30 pm **Wednesday 13 April**

Committee 7 April

Function Room, Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Issue 210  
March 2015

## **Branch News**

### **February Branch Meeting**

It was reported that apologies had been received from the Sea Cadets Leader for not being able to give his promised talk last month; reminders that members are welcome at Peaker Park social events; following our success in winning the top County Awards an application for a National award has been submitted; due to lack of interest there will be no more top County Awards; there is still uncertainty about the 9 members the RBL system show as unpaid; the Poppy Calls handyman service is no longer means tested; Armed Forces Day this year will involve a parade and an event on The Square where seats will be available for veterans; John Cox attended the County Standard Bearers' AGM.

### **After Meeting Talk**

Professor Ronald Spiers entitled his talk 'Bon Voyage' which was very appropriate for this much travelled Medical Academic. Memories of events and experiences were related under categories such as Delays, Security, Local customs, Language, Precautions, etc. As told, many of these recollections, were very amusing but some must have been serious or frustrating at the time.

### **Coffee Morning**

A disappointing event with lack of support from branch members, fewer than usual visitors, ACF cadets missing (later their leader sent his abject apologies for absence) leaving the four St John cadets on kitchen duty as the only young helpers and although there was a reasonable number of Tombola items, the stall was cleared early. The financial result of £244 for Branch funds contrasts with that of 15 years ago (see page 3).

## **DO NOT MISS**

**Saturday 19th March,  
7 for 7.30 p.m. at Market  
Harborough Golf Club.  
Three course dinner plus  
coffee and mints and en-  
tertainment by well  
known versatile vocalist,  
Lesley Ann. This should  
be a great night to cele-  
brate 93 years of our  
Branch.**

To book ring Pat Middleton  
ASAP on MH 445827

Branch News continued on p7

### **Cover Photo**

Part of the photo on page 5 taken in 1993 and found amongst Joy Whitlock's collection.

## Remember This? (From )



from John Chamberlain  
(ex-Royal Marines)

HAVING READ THE last issue of "In Touch", two articles caught my eye. The first was about the Royal Artillery in which the RMA was described as the Royal Mountain Artillery. There was another RMA--the Royal Marine Artillery, which existed before they were amalgamated into the Royal Marines. Before that time the RMA provided detachments to the Royal Marines.

During my service (1947-54) one could express a preference to serve "Sea Service" or in "The Brigade" (which meant becoming a RM commando). I chose the sea service, which brings me to the second article.

From 1949 to 1950 I served aboard HMS Belfast, stationed in Hong Kong, when we got caught up in the Yangtse Incident.

You may recall that on April 20th,

1949, the Chinese Communists fired upon British ships in the Yangtse-Kiang River. Some of the ships, including HMS Charity, Cossack and London made a dash for freedom, but the Amethyst was trapped in the river for some 14 weeks. The Belfast was dispatched to the river mouth and was on station there for six weeks until the Amethyst made its dramatic dash to escape.

HMS Belfast was on a courtesy cruise around Japan when the Korean War broke out and so we also got involved in that. Stationed at Sasebo, Southern Japan, the ship made five-day sorties to bombard the Korean coast and also covered the American landing there.

At the time the Belfast was due to return to the UK, I had become friendly with a Japanese family with an open invitation to their home; so when a marine on board HMS Jamaica wanted to return to the UK for compassionate reasons, I swapped places with him and remained in the Far East for a further 10 months.

### *Coffee Morning*

**ONCE AGAIN WE** had a very successful Coffee Morning at the Harborough Theatre on Saturday, February 24th with a record profit of £304.24 (worth £421 in 2016) which included several cash donations. The Social Committee would like to thank all members who helped with this success.



Concentrating in the March  
After Meeting game

## Search for a long lost Relative

by Joy Whitlock

During World War II my father was



Ernest Rosier (Dad)

in the RASC and whilst awaiting evacuation from France in 1945 he was sent a newspaper where

he read that his older sister Maud and daughter Beryl had died after being bombed in their Sidcup home. However he never knew what had happened to Beryl's twin sister Josie.

I had been researching our family history for a number of years and so in 1992 decided to try and find out what had become of Josie as I thought it would put my father's mind to rest. He only knew Josie's father by his nickname of Jock McDonald and although I carried out extensive research there were scant details to go on other than my father thinking the house had been hit by a doodlebug rocket around March 1945. In the newspaper article he read in France it mentioned that Josie had been injured but gave no clue to her whereabouts

and I thought the best option was to contact a paper local to that area to see if they would run an article appealing for any information which might help in the search.

After the article appeared in The Kentish Times in June 1993 I had several replies from people who had known the twins, Josie and Beryl. One friend wrote to say she had walked home from school with them on the day of the bombing and stood chatting at the garden gate before the girls went indoors to do their homework whilst she carried on her way home two blocks away. June said in her letter that Josie was buried for quite some time as she had a beam across her legs and the water tank on her stomach trapping her.

My big break came when a lady phoned from Wales to say that Josie was still alive and she was living in Burgess Hill so a few phone calls later and I was able to speak with Josie for the very first time. We learned that it was not a doodlebug which had hit the house in Sidcup, Kent but a V2 rocket which was like a modern ballistic missile. It was much bigger than a doodlebug and more dangerous but unlike the V1, you could not see – or hear- a V2 coming as it travelled faster than the speed of sound. Maud had been 41 and Beryl was only 12 years old. From an extensive Internet



search I found out that seven people had lost their lives that day and one hundred people injured.

Josie explained that she'd spent many months in hospital after the bombing and later her father had remarried and they had moved away from the area. She went on to become a teacher, married Arthur who was a civil servant, travelled the world and had two daughters plus six granddaughters. I was able to contact the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and get a copy of Maud and Beryl's entry in the Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour and found they had been killed on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1945.

My father was delighted to have found



Josie and Dad 8/9/1993

Josie and I think the feeling was mutual as she had no knowledge of her mother's side of the family and was thrilled to have the gaps filled in, finding she had gained an uncle and aunt as well as numerous cousins. After all those years both she and her husband Arthur were able to visit my parents on several occasions until my father passed away in 1996.

## The V2 Rocket

Text & picture extracted from [historylearningsite.co.uk](http://historylearningsite.co.uk).

The V2 was to bring terror to London towards the end of World War Two. The V2 was the first of the true rockets – part of Hitler's revenge (Vergeltungswaffen) weapons – the secret weapons he had promised his generals would win the war. Whereas the V1 could be seen and attacked, the V2 was effectively invisible after it had been fired. The first Londoners knew about a V2, was when it exploded.

The main input behind the V2 came from Wernher von Braun, a German scientist who excelled at rocket propulsion and visualised a rocket that could leave the Earth's atmosphere and re-enter at speeds that made it unstoppable. After some disastrous development

problems the V2 was produced. It was 46 feet in length and fully loaded with fuel and warhead, weighed 13 tons. From launch to the speed of sound took only 30 seconds. Its maximum trajectory height was between 50 to 60 miles for long range targets. Its warhead weighed one ton and could do devastating damage.



## Medals in the News

text from newspaper snippets saved by Colin McIntyre and images found on the Internet by the Editor



HMS Mings veteran Geoff Mellor's Atlantic Star was one of his stolen medals and the MOD charged him £85 for a replacement. He said, 'I am discussed having to pay'. When Moscow sent a free copy of his Russian

medal with a letter from President Putin, Geoff said, 'I was impressed'.

D-Day heroes medal fiasco heads a report saying thousands of D-Day survivors are still waiting for France to fulfil its pledge made during the 70th anniversary to present them with its highest honour the Legion d' Honneur.



An escaping WW2 German POW, about to be caught, gave his Iron Cross to baby Beti Jones in her pram in Llandudno. Now Beti's granddaughter wants to have it returned to Lt Cmdr Herman Tholen's descendents, saying, 'We should not really have it.'



## Miscellany

### March 1916 News Items

- 5<sup>th</sup> Zeppelin raids in eight counties kill 12.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Portuguese seize 4 German ships near South Africa
- 9<sup>th</sup> Germany declares war on Portugal
- 10<sup>th</sup> A War Savings Committee calls for less extravagance in women's dress
- 15<sup>th</sup> Admiral von Tirpitz resigns as German Navy Minister
- 18<sup>th</sup> Women dockers in Liverpool withdraw when men refuse to work with them
- 21<sup>st</sup> Import of spirits, motors and pianos banned for duration



### Odd Ads

- For sale - Several old dresses from grandmother in beautiful condition.
- Tired of cleaning yourself? Let me do it.
- Dog for sale: eats anything and fond of children.
- Vacation Special: have your house exterminated.



### March Branch Lunch

Another well attended get-together of about 32 members but unfortunately not in the attractive large dining room. Instead we were split between the two ground floor rooms with eight of us in the smaller and the others out of sight in the larger. Judging by the cleared plates, those on our tables enjoyed the meal and all booked for next month when the menu and 'Choices' form was circulated.

**LUNCH**

**AT THE  
ANGEL**



for good food and good company

**5 APRIL**

**MEET IN THE  
BAR AT NOON**

#### Brief Menu

Goat cheese & spinach tart,  
Smoked haddock & fried potatoes,  
Chicken thighs in smoked bacon,  
Faggots on mash & onion gravy.  
Fresh fruit salad & sorbet,  
Apple Flan & custard,  
Lemon Meringue & cream.  
Tea coffee & mint all for £9.20

For more details and to book, contact  
Kathie Morley,  
email [kathiemorley@talktalk.net](mailto: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

### Legion Matters

#### The website

When Mark Hudson launched our branch website in December 1998. It was one of the first in the Legion and preceded that produced by HQ. Over the years that has grown enormously and now emphasises for site visitors the RBL work and activity for the Armed Forces Community but matters directly related to membership is not as easily accessible as it used to be.

However, there are some very interesting stories in 'Community/Stories' section like 'From Burma with Love' about a couple now in their 90s who met in India in WW2 just before he was posted to Burma. Some very good photos are included. 'The Queen's first VC' is a contrasting story of the bravery of a Private in a Scottish Regiment in Korea.

Amongst recent News items is that the next RBL National President has been appointed ready to take over at the National Conference. The role rotates each three years between retired senior officers of the three Services, this time from the RAF.

What the website does not include is anything to explain the newspaper headline 'Legion man stole £10k of Poppy cash' which related to the Treasurer of a Buckinghamshire branch who, over a three year period, 'stole more than £10,000 from Poppy Appeal collection tins'. He was jailed for 16 months.  
*(Editor)*

## What's Going On?

### Forthcoming Events

- 19 **Anniversary Dinner**  
Mar **Dance @ Golf Club**  
7pm for 7.30 .see p2  
for details & to book
- 27 Peaker Park Carvery Lunch  
Mar 12.30pm £5. Branch  
Members welcome
- 13 Branch meeting + event TBA  
Apr
- 11 Branch meeting + event TBA  
May
- 8 Jun Branch Meeting +  
celebrating 20 Years of In  
Touch
- 26 Jun Armed Forces Day Parade  
and event on The Square

#### Welfare

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

#### 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

The 'Burnt Records . . . .', Miscellany, 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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