

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

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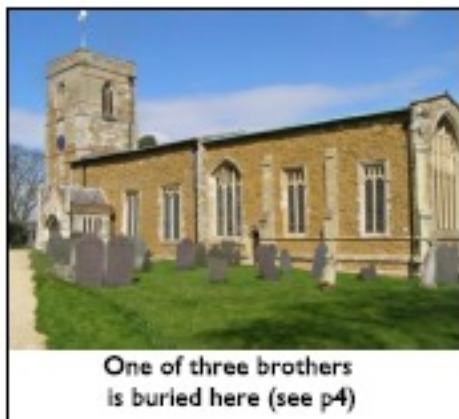
Years of



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1916



One of three brothers
is buried here (see p4)

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm **Wednesday 8 June**
Committee 2 June

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Issue 212
May 2016

Branch News

April Branch Meeting

In his opening remarks the Chairman reminded members of the centenaries of the Somme, Jutland and Gallipoli. ANZAC Day commemoration would be in Victoria Park, Leicester at 7am on 25 April. Matters from the agenda included the decision to not hold a coffee morning in February again because of the poor support this year, the 50p increase of the 'Mess Fund' and the monthly raffle, thanks for an enjoyable Anniversary Dinner despite poor branch attendance, reminders of forthcoming events, two TRBL documents the Secretary had received, that another nomination for County Chairman had been submitted, the damaged pages in the Books of Remembrance had been replaced and the Roll of Honour had been located at the Council Offices. The confusion continues over Branch membership numbers arising from the new RBL subscription payment system. The latest Poppy Appeal total of £28,338 included the branch share of money raised at the Leicester F C Poppy match. Details of the Armed Forces Day parade and drumhead service were being finalised. Although our Standard Bearer had been invited, she will be unable to attend the Remembrance event at the Albert Hall in November.

More Branch News on p7

After Meeting Talk

Mr Bob Harkwell's talk, illustrated with slides, was entitled Invasions but he did not show us the Romans marching through Harborough or the Vikings rowing up the Welland. He did refer to the threat of a French invasion which would have been resisted by the Harborough Royal Volunteers of which he showed pictures. Bob described how the Volunteers had changed and developed over the years and where they had their HQs and training areas. The names of some of the locations still exist as reminders of their original purpose. The Territorials who marched off from The Square in August 1914 were volunteers, as were the Home Guard in WW2 facing the threat of invasion from Germany. A welcome and more friendly invasion was by the American forces based in the area.. The war also saw the arrival of those constructing and the occupying the RAF airfield near Foxton, Evacuees arrived and Prisoners of War were based in the area. Then at the end of the war those who had left returned. Some of these who were or became members of the British Legion built the HQ which, in its present dilapidated state, was shown on one of Bob's final slides.

The appreciation of his very knowledgeable talk was shown by the applause Bob received.

Cover Photo

St Andrews Church Burton Overy copied from
www.leicestershirevillages.com

Remember This? (from May 2011)

More Defence Cuts on the Way



National Arboretum Visit

Our friends in the RNA are organising a trip to the National Arboretum on Tuesday 19 July. The coach will leave the Market Hall bus station on Northampton Rd at 9am. The coach should arrive in time for the daily Act of Homage in the Chapel and thereafter you can tour the Arboretum at your leisure. The coach will depart at 3pm arriving back in market Harborough about 4-15pm.

There is a cafe available serving hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks or you can take your own and eat at the tables provided. Admission is free and the coach will cost £7 per person.

RBL 90th Tea Party

Celebrate the 90th anniversary of the RBL, with the Air Cadets at a Mad Hatters Tea Party on the afternoon of June 12th at their Headquarters behind the Leisure Centre. Times are from 2pm to 4pm.

Please come along, free ticket (from John Standish) entitles you to have a tea or coffee but please bring some cakes/biscuits with you for all to share.

As the theme suggests wearing appropriate head wear will add to the festive atmosphere and general enjoyment..

Please support our young people who are recognising 90 years of RBL service.

They Gave Their Tomorrows

by Brian Lee

This is one of the many stories of those local men who volunteered to serve their country, following the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. Of those men who all left their homes, friends and families to fight on foreign soil many would not see either family or friends again, having made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

This story concerns three brothers



George Cox

from the village of Burton Overy in Leicestershire. John, Walter and George Cox. Both Walter and George were killed in action; Walter on October 30th 1917 aged 26 and George on November 8th 1916 aged 28. John, the eldest of the three brothers was also a victim of the Great War but not until September 7th 1918 in London at the age of 34. He had served in the Royal Army Service Corps in France in 1917, and in Jerusalem in March 1918. He was reportedly injured

by a lorry and was known to be in hospital in Egypt in May 1918. From here, in June 1918, he was returned to England on the hospital ship Kalyon and was admitted to the Bermondsey Military Hospital,

where he was visited by family members. It is not clear how badly injured he was, as he lost his life to tuberculosis some months later.



John Cox

John Cox is buried in the churchyard at Burton Overy, while George lies in Grove Town Cemetery by the Somme, and Walter, who has no known grave is listed on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium.

Thus was the Cox family deeply affected by the Great War, with the loss of three members of the same family early in their young lives.



Walter Cox



JOHN COX was my maternal grandfather

My Story

I was born on the 27th December 1927 in a region of pre-war Germany which is now non-existent. Life was extremely difficult, with runaway inflation and wages were literally taken away in a wheelbarrow.

My Father was a self-employed blacksmith. Mother was the one who had to make ends meet: I was lucky to be too young to really remember too much of it.



Old Blacksmith shop

I was christened Heinz Rudi Prussnat in March 1928 and at some point the family moved to a house with a blacksmith's shop attached, for which Father took out a mortgage in 1929 *[this was paid off in 1942 but in 1945 the Russians confiscated the property, leaving the family homeless].*

I was a happy child, irrespective of the fact that I went off on my own on a number of occasions: the first time at 4 years old, but I was soon spotted and returned to the family.

When I started school, I thought that I only had to go that day so it was quite a shock to find that I had to go more than once. My days were my own, then my new sister was born, which meant more baby-sitting for me as my

elder brother and 2 sisters had left home by this time, which put an end to my fishing trips but not to my day-dreaming.

In the year that I started school, a major political change which affected both young and old took place in Germany.

I remember that family life on the surface did not change but schooling was certainly affected. For example at ten years old we had to join the Hitler Youth, and many other organisations seemed to require the wearing of uniforms.

Over the next two years as more men were called up, there was a shortage of labour, so I was either involved in harvesting or working with my Father.



Rudi probably worked like this

I recall that within 6 weeks I was able to shoe horses but obviously my education was suffering, so in 1942 I left school and took a year off [GAP YEAR ?] before starting my apprenticeship.

To be continued in July

Medals in the News

Newspaper clipper Colin McIntyre has found these two new stories. Images are from the Internet.

A lucky escape

Lieutenant Frank Barlow was serving on the Western Front and was saved from serious injury when an anti-personnel shell hit his cigarette case in his breast pocket.



Lieutenant Barlow kept the dented case for the rest of his life, and it will now be sold at

auction, together with his Military Cross at a pre sale estimate of £1,000

Sale of hero's medal

A school has been criticised for planning to sell a war hero's medals including a Victoria Cross.

Lt Colonel Philip Bent was awarded the VC after he was killed in 1917 while leading an attack on German positions at the age of 26. His mother had left the medals to Ashby School "to inspire future generations", but the school now plans to sell them and use the cash to build a sports hall. There has been considerable opposition to this plan and it is now awaiting a decision regarding the legal position.



Miscellany

May 1916 News Items

- 8th Germans begin a fierce attack along the banks of the Meuse
- 9th Government says Ireland will be excluded from conscription
- 12th Seven Irish Easter Rising rebels executed
- 14th Martial law in Ireland eased
- 20th British Empire troops have forced the Turks back from the river Tigris
- 20th UK to supply France with coal because French mines are in the war zone
- 21st Summer Time introduced in Britain
- 31st Battle of Jutland - heavy losses to British and German fleets



Sorry I forgot the serviettes, Sir

Commenting on a complaint from a Mr Arthur Purdey about a large gas bill, a spokesman for North West Gas said, 'It is possible Mr Purdey was charged for the gas used in the explosion that destroyed his house.'

More Branch News

Queen's Birthday Beacon Lighting at the Market Harborough football club was attended by some members of the Branch no doubt lost in the crowd the Harborough Mail reported. The event at the Leicestershire County Council offices was by invitation only but two branch members were there.

Youth Officer, Betty Ramsay was joined by fewer than hoped for other branch members at the St George's Day Celebrations and Achievements of the Market Harborough and District Scouts held at Welland Park Academy Assembly Hall.



Harborough Mail photo shows them on way to Welland Park

Continued from p6

Return of prized medals

A WW2 hero holds his medals again, thanks to regulars at his local. Tom Sparkes, aged 95 of Grain in Kent, had misplaced the military decorations won from campaigns in France, Germany and North Africa, but the community in his village clubbed together in secret to obtain replacements which were presented to him at his local village pub.

The branch was represented by duty bound, early risers at the 7am ANZAC Day commemoration in Victoria Park, Leicester.

The Queen's official birthday on 12 June will be marked with an Evensong Service at 3pm in Leicester Cathedral. If you would like to attend please contact Betty Ramsay

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



With our RNA and RAFA friends

7 JUNE MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON

Celebrating the Queen's birthday

The special 'A Royal Trip around the Commonwealth' 3 Course menu starts with 'A P & O Cruise' - exotic fruits & sorbet. All dishes have appropriate royal names, Main course items are Roast Beef in beer rich gravy, etc., Chicken on Maltese style ratatouille, White fish fillet and Aubergine with potato & egg curry called *Outspoken Phillip*.

Deserts are Eton Mess, Trinity Cream, Bread and butter pudding or cheese & biscuits (£2.50 extra)

Coffee or tea and mints

All for £12 to be paid on the day

To book, if you did not do so at the May lunch, contact Kathie Morley, email 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

- 7 Jun RBL, RNA, RAFA Lunch @
The Angel
- 16 Jun RNA Cheese & Wine 7pm
@ Grt Bowden Village Hall
- 18 Jun AFD Coffee morning @
theatre. Helpers & stall
items please
- 20 Jun AFD Flag Raising
- 26 Jun AFD Parade & Drumhead
Service on The Square 2pm
- 30 Jun Somme commemoration @
Memorial Gardens 2000 hrs
- 13 July Branch meeting + talk about
the Police

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
In Touch 20 Years Special,
Miscellany, News, etc.

Branch Contacts

Chairman

Rev. John Morley 01858 419714
revjmorley@talktalk.net

Vice Chairman

Janet Lee 077709 59845
janetlee39@ymail.com

Secretary, Welfare & Youth Betty
Ramsay 01858 434923
betty.ramsay@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer & Membership Secretary
Myra Grewcock 01858 419517
m.grewcock47@gmail.com
8 Holdenby Close, MH. LE16 8JE

Poppy Appeal

Dave Prior 01858 540431
Office - 6 Fairfield Road MH LE16 9QQ
01858433492
paoteam.rbl@btinternet.com

Standard Bearer

Hilary Brazil c/o 01858 434923

Monthly Lunches

Kathie Morley 01858 419714
kathiemorley@talktalk.net

In Touch - Editor

Tom Ashmore 01858 433108
tashmore@ukvet.net
9 The Pastures, MH . LE16 9EA

Branch Website

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

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