

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

Issue 230
November 2017

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279



LIVE ON

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

94

Years of Caring



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1917



No, but we did have coffee with Bill.
Meet him on p5

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 13 December
Committee 7 December

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Branch News

October General meeting

The Chairman welcomed Robert Constable-Maxwell of Husbands Bosworth branch as a guest. The 27 members present heard that the refurbishment of the Memorial Crosses should be ready by 25 October when volunteers were needed to place them; Nine members would use the Community mini bus to attend the de Montfort Festival of Remembrance; it was hoped that Harborough Mail and HFM would publicise the Remembrance Events which included a short service by the Hospital Memorial Portico at 2pm on 11th November. rehearsals for Remembrance Sunday would be at 6pm on the 10th; the Poppy Appeal coffee morning would be on 14 October and the launch on The Square at 11 am on 28th. despite changes to the administration of the Market Hall it was hoped a Poppy stall would be available; posters had been out for the Band Concert at 2pm, 26 November at Welland Park Academy; Branch Community Support (Welfare) report; Team Reports said Standard Bearer attended the Battle of Britain Service, 22 people were at the Branch lunch, a new Armed Forces Committee would be formed in January, In Touch was being distributed.

Branch AGM

The Chairman thanked the 27 members present. In his report the President thanked the Chairman, Officers and Committee for their hard work and encouraged members to continue to support them. He emphasised the support given by the Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Michael Rook, including flood-lighting the Old Grammar School in red at Remembrance time, At his request, members approved a Vote of Thanks to the Standard Bearer, Hilary Brazil. The Chairman's Report included his thanks to the President and those he had mentioned, plus Standard Bearer, the Poppy, Social and In Touch teams and the three committee members and the Secretary who were standing down. Betty Ramsay would continue as County Youth Officer and Branch Community Support Representative. He had represented the Branch at many events and had productive meetings with Cllr. Rook. The Treasurer's Report showed the audited account balances at the end of the financial year, 30 June. In the Membership Secretary Report were details of the number of meetings held, their average attendance and membership numbers, now 129. The Welfare Report said

Continued on p 3

Cover Image

Photo taken by Tom Ashmore on 29th July 1988 in Andamooka, South Australia

Continued from p2
there were now 3 supporters and a representative. The **Youth Officer** reported the activity of the local groups. The **Poppy Appeal** total for the year was £26,749 and the PAO thanked the volunteers and his team for their work. Under **Social** 10 lunches and the Anniversary Dinner in a new location had all been successful. The **Standard Bearer's** many engagements were reported. The meeting confirmed the acceptance of the new **Bye Laws**. The existing two **Vice Presidents** would continue to serve and the **President** would be appointed by the Committee. In the absence of a nomination

for **Branch Secretary**, Sara Whitley-Kinzett said she would stand and was elected. A new member of the **Committee** was elected after Jill Mann offered to join. Delegates to **County and National Conferences** were Stewart Harrison and John Standish respectively. Finally, the **Chairman** outlined his **objectives** for the coming year including the development of short, medium and long term plans for the branch. He emphasised the need for members to attend meetings and encourage others to do so. He would welcome new ideas about what the Branch does.

This stick-on is to add the above that was missing on what had been printed.

Remember these? (From November 2007)

Up, Up and Away



All who saw the flight from Bruntingthorpe Airfield of the Avro Vulcan could not fail to be impressed by the sheer size and elegance of the superb aircraft. We congratulate all involved in the restoration and preservation of this historic example of British aeronautical excellence

Travels with my Standard

Remembrancetide activities began for George this year with the launch of the County Poppy Appeal at RAF Bruntingthorpe, home of the magnificently re-

stored Avro Vulcan. The official launch was by **Tori White** who had been chosen by the Legion to sing a song especially written for the Appeal and seen here with George.



A Visit to the Opal Fields

extracts from **Joan Ashmore's Diary**

with comments (in italics) and photos by Tom Ashmore

Thursday 28 July (1988)

Off to Coober Pedy this morning. Taxi arrived 07.40 Drove to Parafield Aerodrome (near where we were staying with friends north of Adelaide, South Australia) where our plane was waiting. Turned out to be a 42 year old 4 seater stripped of paint and looking very small. Met Eric Bayne the pilot (who was sticking on the. Identification letters). Until he returned to Australia he had been



flying Boeing 737 (from UK) to Lagos, Majorca, Lanzarote etc. Had worked for this little flying outfit (Skytours) some 17 years previously. He is married to an Australian, hence now living in Australia.

Tom sat beside Eric as he wanted to read map. I sat behind and shared my seat with 2 thermos flasks and Tupperware containing coffee / tea making equipment. Had to make an unexpected to stop for fuel due to slow progress because of a 40 knot head wind all the way. We arrived Coober Pedy 1 pm instead of 11.30. Had time for a few very good

sandwiches and a drink in an old mine converted to a little cafe. Then taken on tour of Coober Pedy town. Looked like the end of the world. Mounds of white clayey substances, topped sometimes with a funnel type air hole and in some cases TV aerial. These were the dugouts the miners live in to escape the sometimes 140 degree heat of summer. We visited one, an underground church (there were two), and the incredible and very modern (mainly) underground motel.

(Out of town the mines are on 50 metres square claims each to only one miner. He digs a shaft down to a level where he thinks opals might be and then sideways). The spoil (brought up on a winch) is piled near its shaft and looks the same as the dug out dwellings. The whole landscape was of these grey shapes scattered over the mining area.



The winch has become a symbol of this kind of mining

Sometimes one could see smoke from a piece of machinery, or a battered old car, a noddling machine to go through the spoils and an odd man or two.

Later that day we flew to Andamooka, another opal mining



Eric looking to see if Mrs Duker's car was on its way to pick us up

town. Here we were staying at Duker's Guest House – described as not The Hilton. A correct description - owned by a German lady who came there only 20 years ago. They preserved their first home – a corrugated shack containing a bed, chair and basic cooking equipment. Unbelievable, such conditions only 20 years ago. Our room was partitioned hardboard with old lino on the floor. One double bed, 1 single bed, old table and 2 upright chairs. Loos (dunnies) outside the back door. A couple of showers tacked onto the side of the house, only accessible by going outside and round. (More interesting

was the room in which Mrs Duker displayed the opals she sold. Its walls were made of used beer bottles)



After dinner we went (into town past the Wild West style pub with its hitching rail but no horses!) to see

Albert, a fascinating character who went through his pieces of rock to find something that would cut so we saw him shape opal stones from the rough. It took about 2 hrs from start to finish for 2 small pieces (which Joan bought).

Friday 29 July

Eric borrowed the car and we went for a hazardous drive over the rough terrain (to see how) differently they mine here – the ground has more rock. They use big machines (such as drills or more often those used for open cast mining where) they only have to go 30 ft down. Opal is very difficult to find and one never knows if one opal found, leads to another. (From the mining area we went to Bill MacDougle's Ettomogah pub, a timber shack surrounded by an amusing collection of road signs inappropriate here in the



middle of nowhere. Bill was an odd character but for his fundraising for the Flying Doctor Service had won him a Government award.).

(Joan's opals, now set in jewellery, are a reminder of those two unforgettable days.)

Ken West

known to Branch members as the author of several stories published in *In Touch*, died recently. He was a leading member of the Leicestershire branch of the Normandy Veterans Association. Condolences are sent to his family including his brother-in-law, Tom Jeacock.

From the Archives



Ken West joined branch members for lunch at the Coach & Horses, Kibworth in 2001

John & Frances Swannack search for answers in an after meeting game in 2004?



Hospital Memorial Portico about which there is now so much concern

Miscellany

November 1917 News Items

- 5th British troops in France to get Christmas puddings
- 8th Canadian troops take village of Pashendale
- 13th Bankers call for decimilisation of British currency
- 18th British troops capture Jaffa in Palestine
- 26th Lenin offers Russian armistice with Germany
- 30th US 'Rainbow' Division, in which all US states are represented, arrives in France under the command of Col. MacArthur

Remember, Remember, the fifth of November

LONDON, 1605



Before we blow the whole thing up have you though of a referendum?

I'm good at firework displays. I've got a flare for it.
You don't have to be a rocket scientist to light a bonfire.
A battery and a firework were arrested. One was charged, the other let off.

More Branch News

Following the AGM there was a short **Poppy Appeal Awards** presentation but only one of those eligible was present.

Then to finish off what had been a rather formal evening there was a generous, attractive and tasty buffet.

The Coffee Morning on 14 October attracted nearly 50 people who contributed to a total of £270.04 for the Poppy Appeal. Branch members and ACF Cadets were on duty.

Pat Walker arranged for 12 Branch members to go to de Monfort Hall on 12th October for a concert by the Band of the Coldstream Guards accompanied by two lady singers in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund. The band which is said to be the best army band in the world, played some lovely music including medleys of James Bond theme tunes and from the film *The Dam Busters* by Eric Coates and we all had a very enjoyable evening.

On 21st October, the RNA celebrated 'the glorious victory at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805' with a formal dinner at which the guest of honour was Lt Commander Sarah-Louise Peachey, a Naval barrister, who proposed the Toast to 'the Immortal Memory' and after the meal ordered 'Splice the Mainbrace' when rum was served. The White Ensign was raised in the Memorial Gardens in honour of this event.

Branch member Tony Johnson was a finalist in the Amplifon Bravery Awards 2017 and although he did not win, enjoyed his visit to London.



Committee Members

Jill Mann (MH 461572)
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Pat Middleton (MH 445827)
Kathie Morley (MH 419714)
Barbara Pickup (MH 433492)
Pat Walker (MH 545560)

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

**5 DECEMBER MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON**

MENU

Roast turkey; cod fillet on mash;
slow braised beef on mash; vegeta-
ble casserole; vegetable stroganoff
on rice. Chocolate fudge cake;
fresh fruit salad; crème brûlée;
Xmas pudding & brandy sauce.

Tea or coffee & mints. £9.25

To book, contact Kathie Morley on
01858 419714 or by email
kathiemorley@talktalk.net
To cancel, ring The Angel (01858
462702) before 10 am on the day or
you will be charged

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 26 Nov Band Concert 2.30pm
Welland Park Assembly
Rooms. Tickets from Mr &
Mrs McIntyre or pay at door
- 2 Dec RNA Coffee Morning
- 9 Dec Sea Cadets Coffee Morning
- 13 Dec Branch meeting + Quiz
- 10 Jan Branch meeting
- 13 Jan County Conference @ Melt-
on Mowbray
- 23 Mar Anniversary Dinner @ Con.
Club

Welfare

If you know any one who may
benefit from Legion welfare ring
Betty Ramsay on 01858 434923

RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7
days a week on 0800 802 8080 for
advice and support for serving & ex-
service people and dependents.

In Touch Next Month

From the Archives, Miscellany,
Remember This?, News, etc.

*The views expressed in this newsletter
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Committee - see Page 7