

# 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

### 94

Years of Caring



## Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

### Centenary Year of 1918



No, it was not near here but pages 4 & 5 say where.

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting**  
**7.30 pm Wednesday 14 February**  
**Committee 8 February**

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

**Issue 232**  
**January 2018**

## **Branch News**

### **December General Meeting**

Only 21 members were present, the absence of Treasurer and new Secretary due to ill health and others probably because of bad weather. There were two visitors who it is hoped will join the Branch.

Matters dealt with included thanks to those dealing with the Memorial Gardens Crosses; the hope that the 2018 Band Concert would be in the Baptist Church, the Academy having been expensive and lacking in atmosphere; the proposed date for 2018 M H Poppy walk was 10 June; Stewart Harrison would be the Branch delegate at the County Conference; current membership was 129; some Poppy Appeal collections were still awaited but others were encouraging; some visits and telephone calls were made by Branch Community Supporters and recorded; the Standard had been carried at all the Remembrance events and it was proposed that the branch's gratitude to Hilary Brazil should be recorded; a reminder that the Tri-Service lunch was on 9 January; on 18 January there would be a meeting to appoint a new Armed Forces Day Committee; *In Touch* was ready for distribution and was online.

### **After Meeting Event**

See top of next column.

## **2017 After Meeting Events**

### **December**

Quiz by Jill Mann & mince pies

### **November**

Talk by Stewart Harrison - 'Aden's Dirty War'

### **October (AGM)**

Poppy Appeal awards presentation & buffet

### **September**

Poetry reading by members

### **August**

Talk by Jackie McBlain about LOROS proposed local 'Wellbeing Centre'

### **July**

A discussion on ways to attract new members

### **June**

Glyn Illiffe, dressed as a WWI soldier, spoke about 1917

### **May**

Talk by David Kyle about USA

### **April**

Ken Hook & Margaret Richards spoke 'Market Harborough in Bloom'

### **March**

No meeting but Anniversary Dinner

### **February**

Talk about Sea Cadets

### **January**

Talk about and by local Scouts

Cover Image

Photo taken by Tom Ashmore at the National Memorial Arboretum  
on 19th July 2011

## *Remember these?* (From January 1997)

### **The Brotherhood of Man** By a Former Naval Person

Funny stories of incidents in the Services abound. The long suffering Sergeant Major is often the Army's subject (see page 4). In the Navy the character is Stripey, the 3 badge A.B.; too wise to seek promotion after 15 years or more service; always prosperous and always able to act dumb, thus avoiding detection of any wrong doing, and very popular with his Shipmates.

Stripey, with his brush, knew that he was safe if he kept moving; he was the duty Parade Ground Sweeper.

### **Memories by Hotspur**

By any standard the parade ground at Gujarat Barracks, Colchester, was impressive. To an 18 year old Officer Cadet, seeing it for the first time it was awesome. Tucked away in a corner of this vast arena stood the squad of about twenty Officer Cadets under the command of Company Sergeant Major Walldock, expert without equal in all forms of Army drill. His imposing presence was matched only by his stentorian voice. Some said his words of command could be heard as far away as Ipswich.

He had called the squad to attention about four times before he was satisfied. Then came his next command,

The Commander of the Barracks, noted as a most unpleasant 3 Ringer of doubtful parentage, challenged Stripey one day with that well used Naval question - "What are you?"

Stripey had been to Church Parade the morning before and heard the Sin Bosun (Chaplain) speak about the Brotherhood of Man.

These good words appealed to Stripey, so he found it a simple matter to answer the Commander's question - "What are you?" with "I'm your brother Sir"!

*This was one of several contributions to In Touch by Bill Cotton.*

"SQUAD - NUMBER!". Anyone familiar with this particular operation will know that it never goes right the first time. "AS YOU WERE!" echoed round the barracks and the surrounding countryside. Coldly, the C.S.M. repeated his command, "SQUAD - NUMBER!". Again it went wrong. Thinking he was dealing with idiots, imbeciles masquerading as potential Officers, he called "Stand Easy, and pay careful attention to me. Numbering in the Army, Officer Cadets - ALL you has to do is add one to the number what the man on your right has shouted out, then shout that number out if you can".

"SQUAD NUMBER!"

*Bernard Halsall wrote as Hotspur*

## ***Finding LN394***

by Tom Ashmore

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 a metal detector search was carried out at the probable location of where, in August 1944, the Wellington Bomber



LN394 crash landed. Branch member David French with two other detectorists were supported by Brian Thomas and my self with the agreement and help of the land owner a few miles north of Great Bowden. The exact location is not being made public to avoid souvenir hunters.

The event was the outcome of help from M H branch requested by a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Peter Wolfendale. He had been carrying out research about a Royal Canadian Air Force plane piloted by his wife's cousin which had crashed with the total loss of life of the crew. Peter had found that the plane was based at the RAF Training Airfield near Foxton and as a night-time exercise had taken off from a runway but crashed after a very short flight. The Accident Report written

immediately after the crash said the plane had hit an electricity pylon and landed near the railway sidings near Welham.

Peter had contacted our Branch Secretary in the hope that our members' local knowledge might help in finding the exact location of the crash and because in the information he sent, there was reference to the sidings, I contacted Phillip Baildon, of the Harborough Railway Association asking if any of



Welham sidings in 1960

their members had any knowledge of the crash. Their anecdotal evidence based on 70 year old memories and stories placed the crash site near what had been the Level Crossing on the Welham to Great Bowden Lane although no physical evidence had been found by the farmers or others over the years.

During a visit to the UK to see relatives, Peter and his wife, Louise, arranged to meet Phillip and HRA colleagues with me and my son near

the Crossing House and we walked



Tom, Peter, Phil, Louise  
on Bowden Lane

to the gate of the field where the crash was said to have occurred.

There were some inconsistencies in the evidence and it did not account for the childhood memory of one HRA member of seeing, from a bus, a damaged pylon. This prompted Peter to continue his research and from Canadian courses he found the official Court of Enquiry document with statements made from technical and other witnesses giving a more reliable description of the crash location, including a map reference and that the plane's wing had hit a pylon only 20 feet above the ground. The Accident report did give the same map reference although it was not near the sidings.

Based on this new evidence, Peter arranged with the farmer whose land contained the map reference asking if he would allow a metal detector search and he kindly agreed subject to it not being where there were growing crops. By

October the land was clear and the team Tom had arranged, met the farmer and was able to start work. An early piece of evidence that we were near where the plane finished up was that an electricity pylon had obviously been repaired with attached metal plates about 20 feet above the ground and was still in use over 70 years later. No other pylon we saw had similar fixings.

The initial search was at the edge of the field in which the pylon stood and several finds were of heavy bits of probably agricultural material. Moving into the next field David got many signals and the three concentrated the search there and many bits were dug up, all quite small and covered in soil. The only things which were recognisable were of bullets and broken cartridge cases. By measuring the location relative to



Some of what was found  
after cleaning

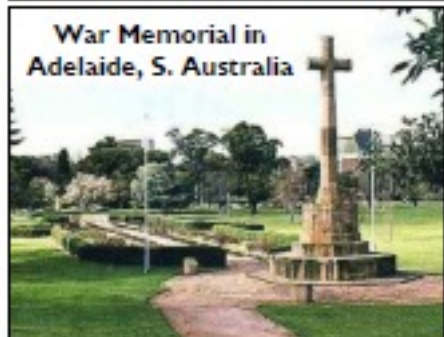
the edges of the field Brian found it was close to the map reference in the 1944 documents. We were sure this was the final resting place of the plane and this is what we told the farmer when we thanked him for his help and interest. For Peter it is the outcome of painstaking research and for Louise, knowing where her cousin died.

## From the Archives

### The Chairman's Gavel

Used at each meeting, it was presented to the Branch by the late Sandy Vials whose father used it when he was Chairman of the local branch of the Old Contemptibles.

War Memorial in  
Adelaide, S. Australia



Our Garden of Remembrance derives from the layout of crosses Tom Jeacock saw here one ANZAC Day



Poppy Walkers  
2012

Robert Cramp at Branch 75th Anniversary Exhibition at Museum 1988



## Miscellany

### January 1918 News Items

- 6<sup>th</sup> Germany recognises the independence of Finland
- 8<sup>th</sup> Two million acres of Britain to be planted with trees
- 9<sup>th</sup> US President Wilson states what the war should achieve
- 10<sup>th</sup> UK married women over 30 to be given the Vote
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Restaurants must not serve meat two days each week
- 31<sup>st</sup> 103 sailors die & 2 submarines lost in night exercises
- 31<sup>st</sup> Martial law declared in Berlin after strikes



### New Year Fun

- Q: What's an ig?  
A: A snow house without a loo
- Q: What do you call a snowman in the summer?  
A. A puddle
- Q: What's the difference between an iceberg and a clothes brush?  
A: One crushes boats and the other brushes coats!
- Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?  
A. Frosted Flakes.

## 2017 Highlights



Betty Ramsay awarded County Certificate at County Conference - 7 January

National Conference 20/21 May attended by Branch delegate, John Standish, Standard Bearer, Hillary Brazil & Betty Ramsay as a county representative



Anniversary Dinner 8th March

Digital and paper archives sent to County Records Office - 24 July

Another successful and popular Poetry Reading - 13 September



Wreath laying ceremony at the Cottage Hospital - 11 November

## Obituary

George Gowing died on 16th December following a spell in the Wil-lows. He had been a Branch member and with his wife was a dedicated Poppy Appeal collector. His Army service was in REME.

We send condolences to his family.

## Committee Members

Jill Mann (MH 461572)

Colin & Pauline McIntyre (email cMcIntyre1945@yahoo.co.uk)

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

**6 FEBRUARY** MEET IN THE  
BAR AT NOON

## MENU

Nugget of pork in sauce; Battered Cod & Chips; Vegetable casserole; all with peas & carrots.

Fresh fruit salad & sorbet; Lemon tart & cream; Cherry & almond pudding w custard.

Tea or coffee & mints. £9.25

To book, contact Kathie Morley on 01858 419714 or by email [kathiemorley@talktalk.net](mailto: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

- 13 Jan County Conference @ Melt-on Mowbray  
6 Feb Branch lunch  
14 Feb Branch Meeting  
14 Mar Anniversary Dinner @ Con. Club - no branch meeting

#### 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 0808 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.

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#### Branch Website

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Committee - see Page 7