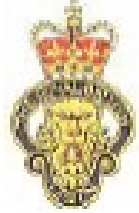


In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279

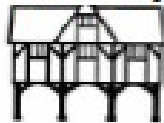


LIVE ON

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

93

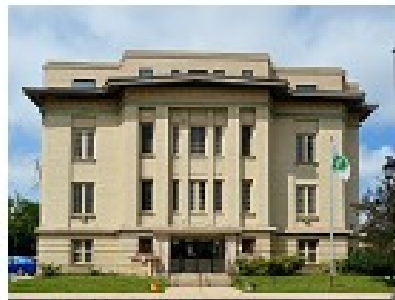
Years of Caring



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1918



Was this building in the American village
when Fred worked there after WWI?
His story is on pages 3 & 4

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 11 April
Committee 8 March

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Issue 233
February 2018

Branch News

January General Meeting

A guest and 25 members were present. They heard that a forthcoming Forward Planning Meeting would consider setting up a Branch Annual Plan; that there would be another meeting of the 'Commemoration of the end of WWI' group; HDC had approved the MH Poppy Walk proposed for 10 June; the MSO (Membership Services Officer) was holding 'clinics' at County Office; the branch had been told of a SSAFA & Age Concern 'Joining Forces Project' for veterans' support; details had been received of a 100th anniversary of the event the RAF event in Leicester; in her report the Treasurer said HQ Membership records showed we had 130 members but there were 2 new members; news was awaited of the new days when the Advice & Information Officer would visit the library; the Poppy Appeal Organiser said what had been received but that small amounts were still expected; activity of the Branch Community Support (Welfare) team were being recorded in the new system for which Betty Ramsay was to attend a training session; the 'Tri-Service' lunch was not as well attended as previously; a new Armed Forces Day Committee was to be appointed; In Touch was complete and being distributed.

After Meeting Event

Stewart Harrison gave a well illustrated talk about the 'Secret War' in Oman where he was serving as part of British military support for that small Gulf state's own forces. These became involved in dealing with insurrection of tribes from the south of the country. Stewart also contrasted the repressive regime of the Sultan with that of his progressive son when he took over as head of state. Applause showed how much the talk had been appreciated.

County Conference

Our Delegate to the County Conference at Melton Mowbray on 13th January was Stewart Harrison who has said "it was an interesting day, useful for putting faces to names you see regularly". Betty Ramsay also attended, as a visitor from our Branch and also as a member of the County Committee (as Youth Officer) and Stewart asked her to prepare notes of the event. It is from these that the following has been prepared.

There from 13 Branch Delegates, 13 Visitors and 15 Standards (including ours carried by Hilary Brazil). The President's Address, in his absence read by Vice President, Col. Boyle, referred to the higher profile of TRBL mainly at National level and many events during the

Cover Image

From the Internet of the Masonic Temple in Maywood, Illinois

Remember these?

(From February 1998 *In Touch Too* when *In Touch* was published in alternate months)

Photo Shy?

It was disappointing that the 14th January meeting was not better attended, despite the appeal in December's *In Touch, Too* for a good turn out for the Branch photograph. Are our members too shy to have their pictures taken?

Chairman Improperly Dressed

The Jewel of Office presented at that meeting and featured in the picture in the *Harborough Mail* was not in evidence at the February meeting and I was censured for the omission! In future a fine will be levied if I am "improperly dressed" but I shall insist that the same rule applies to Peter Wilson now that he has received his President's Jewel! For the benefit of those who were not at either of the meetings, I should explain that these symbols of Legion office were pur-

chased as a result of an anonymous donation.

New-style Meeting

The February Meeting was note-worthy apart from matters of dress. It started at the new earlier time of 7.30pm and a less formal seating arrangement was used. Branch business was covered quite quickly, most items having been dealt with in committee two weeks previously. Thus the main part of the evening was devoted to Tony

Johnson's fascinating talk of his experiences as a prisoner of war after being shot down over Germany and his eventual successful solo escape in 1944. Thank you Tony for an enthralling tale of courage so well, yet so modestly, told.

Judging by the willingness of members to stay and chat after the talk, I feel that this new-style meeting was a success. Let us hope the March meeting is, too.

February Lunch

Prompted by the success of the lunch in December, another one was held on 19th February, this time at *The Countryman*, Great Bowden. Arranged by Tony Johnson, it was voted a very enjoyable occasion and one which should be repeated, possibly becom-

ing a regular branch activity.

In future, to give more people an opportunity to attend, details will be announced in the Newsletters as well as at meetings.

Further lunches were held and at different locations before the present regular monthly events at The Angel Hotel Editor

THE KENT FORTRESS VOLUNTEERS

Family research by John Cook

I too, had never heard of this august body of gentlemen until I decided to follow through another of my mothers family stories. This involved a cousin of hers who returned from Canada to fight in WWI and having completed this task went back and lost contact with our part of the family. I found the cousin Fred Henham via the 1891 census which shows him as the son of Alfred and Jane, licenced victuallers of the Victory Inn at Barming near

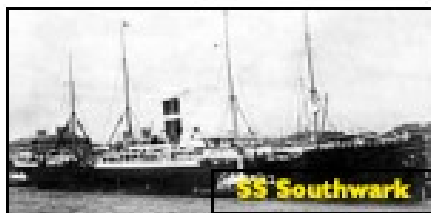


Barming Church now

Maidstone, Kent. Fred was born on 3rd April 1883, (a fact that was to prove invaluable in later research).

Sadly, as with so many, his 'Burnt Records' had not survived but the online medal records showed that Fred was recorded as 2085RE 3rd Kent Fortress Volunteers a Territorial Unit that became the 1st/3rd Unit in 1915. The company was largely recruited from men from the Tonbridge area.

When did Fred join ? He is shown on passenger lists as leaving the UK in 1911 from Liverpool to Montreal on



the White Star Dominion Line ship Southwark and again on the SS Tyrolia from London to Montreal in September 1914. What happened on the intervening trips to and from the UK are as yet unresolved. He certainly qualified for the 1915 Star, War and Victory

Medals so, as evidenced below, must have returned early to mid 1915.



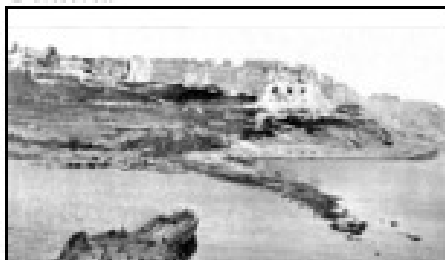
A catastrophic event on the 28th October 1915, proves that he was established and involved before that date. The company left its depot at Gillingham and boarded the troopship Scotian bound for Gallipoli via Madros. On the 27th October they transferred to the minesweeper HMS Hythe for Sulva Bay which, in the early hours of

the morning collided with a much larger troopship HMS Sarnia. The Hythe sank within minutes with the loss of the CO of the 3rd and 128 other ranks. The survivors, 4 officers and 78 ors were picked up by the Sarnia and returned to Mudros. On



Mudros Harbour

the 20th November the survivors re-embarked and landed on the same day at Cape Helles where they were attached to the 52nd Lowland Division.



This is where the first landings were made on 25th April Y Beach beneath the Sedd el Bahr castle.

It became a base for later landings and may be where Fred was put ashore

Fred's war was not yet over, on the night of 7th January the Division was evacuated from Helles to Egypt where the 3rd Kent Company transferred to the 29th Division on the Western Front. They were involved in the battles of the Somme, Arras, 3rd Ypres, Cambrai, Lys and the Hundred Days Offensive. They

became the 595th (3rd Kent) Field Company RE on 1st February 1917 and were disbanded mid March 1919.

Medal cards show that following an Army Council Instruction of 1st February, Fred's Territorial Force Number changed to regular army number 541211 RE. He was Mentioned in Dispatches in 1918, but as yet no details have been found.

He returned, ironically, on the SS Scotian, his former troopship, now operating for Canadian Pacific Ocean Services Ltd, in April 1920 but with the final destination listed as USA via Montreal. The next trace of him I have found is a USA WW2 Draft Registration 1942 where at 59 years of age he was not called upon for service and presumably carried on working as an electrician for the Everhot Manufacturing Company in Maywood, Illinois.

On a Public Family Tree his recorded date of death is in 1973 at Volusia, Florida, USA. Unfortunately the only photo I have found of him is in an online report of the Hythe tragedy in the Kent and Sussex Courier archive which is so degraded as to be unusable.

In conclusion, once again my mothers snippets proved to have more than a grain of truth.

The pictures and captions are from Tom Asmare

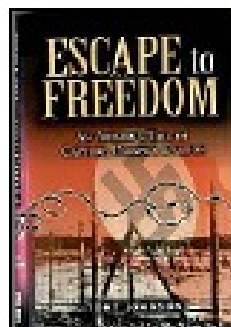
From the Archives



Some Branch members January 1998 (see Photo Shy on Page 3)



Branch lunch at the Countryman February 1998 (see page 3)



Tony Johnson wrote this book as a more complete version of his talk at the February 1988 Branch meeting (see Page 3)

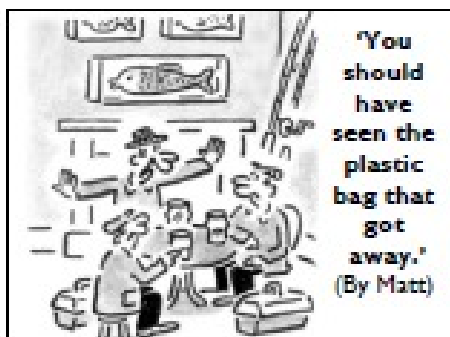


75th Anniversary Exhibition in the museum 1998

Miscellany

February 1918 News Items

- 3rd Berlin strikers ordered to return to work or be shot
- 6th Married women over 30 get the vote
- 8th London & home counties weekly meat ration 20 oz. per adult
- 14th 19 years old George Gershwin's song 'Swanee' appears
- 21st In Palestine Australian cavalry take Jericho
- 27th Lawlessness in Ireland reported to be widespread
- 27th British hospital ship sunk by U Boat in Bristol Channel



February Traditional Days

- 2nd Candlemas when the year's supply of candles were blessed
- 13th (this year) Shrove Tuesday-Pancake Day
- 14th St Valentine's Day may be when birds chose their mates
- 14th (this year) Ash Wednesday start of Lent
- 22nd Thinking Day Scouts & Guides remember their founders

year. He gave thanks to Standard Bearers, for whom there is a heavy demand, the Festival and Conference Committees and Melton Mowbray for hosting the Conference. He also wished Lady Greton, a long and happy retirement after service as Lord Lieutenant of Leistershire and presented her with a small gift and a Certificate in appreciation of her support of TRBL in the county. Later she gave a fascinating illustrated talk about what that demanding role had involved.

The County Chairman's address referred to the need to recruit new members, the many Branches that had not signed up for GP90, although funding was available. He introduced the new County Training Officer, Chris Lincoln.

A very brief summary of Accounts was presented.

Guest speaker Stuart Allen from HQ delivered the 'Corporate Message' highlighting the '4 Points of Strategy', fall in membership, poor take up of the new BCS (welfare) system but more positively, a record £46.6 million Poppy Appeal receipts, good public recognition through many RBL activities such as the Festival of Remembrance, National Memorial Arboretum, etc. Also two new care homes are planned.

Obituary

We have recently learned of the death of Branch member Bob Bond, remembered by longer serving colleagues as being very active, in the Branch and the Poppy Appeal as was his wife Dorothy, to whom we extend our condolences.

Sad news from County

County MSO, Lisa Michael reported that County Chairman, Jim Rowlinson died suddenly on 24 January. He had mentioned that he had heart trouble and it appears to have been a heart attack. Lisa had spoken to his daughter Lynne and passed on condolences to her and to Jean, his wife.

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Colin & Pauline McIntyre (email
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Pat Middleton (MH 445827)
Kathie Morley (MH 419714)
Barbara Pickup (MH 433492)
Pat Walker (MH 545560)

LUNCH
AT THE
ANGEL
THERE IS NO MARCH LUNCH
for good food and good company
3 APRIL **MEET IN THE BAR AT NOON**



What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 14 Mar Anniversary Dinner @ Con. Club - no branch meeting
- 7 Apr 100th RAF Anniversary @ Welford Road Cemetery
- 16 May RNA trip to Greyhound racing @ Peterborough
- 19/20 May TRBL Annual Conference @ Belfast
- 10 Jun Sponsored Walk in Welland (TBC) Park
- 23 Jun RNA Cheese & Wine @ Gt Bowden Village Hall
- 23 Jun Armed Forces Day Service & Parade @ Leicester
- 30 Jun Local Armed Forces Day event

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

'Clandestine Operations', Archives, Miscellany, Remember This?, News, etc.

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Committee - see Page 7