

What's Going On?

The Social & Fund-Raising Team Reports

DIARY OF EVENTS

The date of the next Branch meeting is

Tuesday, December 8
NOTE CHANGED DATE!

8 Dec December Branch Meeting - **REVISED DATE**
2010

5 Jan Christmas Lunch, with RNA and RAFA - **FULL**
19 Mar Branch Anniversary Dinner - **REVISED DATE**

SUPPORT YOUR BRANCH - GET INVOLVED

Wendy Osborne, who has had to retire from the Social Team, is sincerely thanked for her contribution over the past couple of years in organising the increasingly popular monthly lunches at The Angel Hotel.



**Lunch at
The Angel**

**Tuesday
December 1**

**We meet in the
bar at Noon**

**Reserve your
place now with
Glenys Hocking-Davies
on 01858 467835**

MENU

VENISON, PORK & RED WINE SAUSAGES
With mashed & Wholegrain Mustard Gravy

CHICKEN STRIPS IN MADEIRA & MUSHROOM SAUCE
With roast potatoes

CREAMY LEEK-FILLED VOL AU VONT
With goats' cheese glaze, ratatouille new potatoes

All served with seasonal vegetables

|||

TANGY LEMON TART
With dotted cream ice cream

FRESH FRUIT SALAD
With sorbet

PLUM PUDDING
with brandy sauce

COFFEE & MINT CHOCOLATE

Only £7

Join us and enjoy good food in congenial company.

The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch

Reg. Charity 219279

Hon. Secretary:

Betty Ramsay 01858 434923

Welfare:

Vida Edwards 0116 279 3729 Betty Ramsay 01858 434923

Poppy Appeal Organiser:

Dave Pryor 01858 545612 Wreaths: John Liddell 01858 465003

Standard Bearer

George Fleming 01858 462711

Social & Fund Raising Team:

Glenys Hocking-Davies 01858 467835

Les Moore 01858 463112 Freda Carnell 07890 579556

Sara Whitley-Kinzett 01858 434476

Meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough. The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm.

In Touch

www.in-touch.ukvet.net

THE MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER OF THE
MARKET

HARBOROUGH
BRANCH OF THE
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
Founded 1996

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The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

In Touch

Issue 134

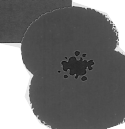
November 2009

An Urgent Request

**Members are respectfully
reminded that subscriptions
are now due.**

**If you are unable to attend
the Branch meeting, please
post your cheque to
Mrs Myra Grewcock at
7 Gapstile Close,
Desborough, NN14 2TZ.**

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



Annual General Meeting November 2009

Branch President, Brian Marshall, looked back on what he referred to as a 'difficult year' for the County and the Branch. However, the period under review was closing on a more positive note and we are able to look ahead with confidence. He thanked Members for their dedicated work in their various activities resulting in one of the most successful branches in the county.

The Chairman, Mark Hudson, echoed the President's words and added his thanks for the support he has received from the membership.

The Officers and Committee Members 2009/10

President	Brian Marshall
Vice-President	Con Halsall
Chairman	Mark Hudson
Vice-Chairman	John Standish
Secretary	Betty Ramsay
Treasurer & Membership Sec.	Myra Grewcock

Welfare	Vida Edwards, Betty Ramsay
Poppy Appeal Organiser	Dave Pryor
Wreaths	John Liddell
Standard Bearer	George Fleming
Social & Fund Raising	Glens Hocking-Davies
	Les Moore
	Freda Carnell
	Sara Whitley-Kinzett

Committee: Members
John Cox, Vida Edwards, Fred Brown,
Sara Whitley-Kinzett, Dave Pryor,
John Liddell, John Faulks.

A Letter from Melissa

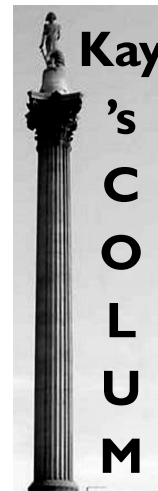
Mention is made on the centre pages of RAF Down Ampney, where a ceremony is held each year in memory of those who operated from the station. Melissa Osborn, the daughter of late Branch Member, Cliff Holt, attended in her father's place this year.

Melissa writes, "We took a little part of Dad's ashes and laid him to rest with his Squadron friends and colleagues at the church that he used as a landmark to find the aerodrome on his way home after buzzing the hotel where he was billeted with my Mum. I then laid the RAF wreath for him at the memorial. We had a flypast of the Memorial Flight Dakota and a Hercules from RAF Lyneham, so it was another memorable day."



Melissa at the Down Ampney Memorial ceremony.

Melissa adds that she and husband, Ron, will be at Westminster Abbey on November 11th, for the 'Passing of the Generation Service'. We are representing Leicestershire, in memory of Ron's two great-uncles, brothers who died in the First World War. One is remembered on the Basra Memorial and the other on the Arras Memorial. Another brother, Ron's grandfather, survived after being taken prisoner, he was awarded a medal for Gallantry. My Dad's name sake, Clifford Holt, fought with the Australians and died in France with the machine gun regiment. My Dad wore his ring for the whole of his life. We were planning a trip to take Dad to see his grave in France when he became ill, such a shame that he never saw it. So that will be yet another emotional occasion.



Kay's COLUMN

Firstly, I'd like to apologise for my absence from In Touch over the past couple of months. I don't have to tell you how busy the Legion gets in the run up to November but this year it seems to have started early!

But there is light at the end of the tunnel for me, as I've recently been blessed with an assistant. Simone Ince joined me as Internal Communications Officer last month so I hope that in the very near future that you'll notice an improvement in the way head office communicates with members – or at least, I should be able to meet George's In Touch deadline each month.

I clearly haven't looked busy enough though, because my boss has decided that I need extra work. From now on, I'll also be responsible for Legion magazine and Legion Extra, as well as LegionLetter. I'll be looking to review all the ways we communicate with our members over the coming months and I'd be very interested in your views on these publications. Please feel free to drop me a line at head office, email me at kcallaghan@britishlegion.org.uk or call me on 020 3207 2244. Feel free to be as candid as you like – I always say that all feedback is good, even if it's negative, because it gives you somewhere to go.

I'll sign off this month by hoping you had a very successful Poppy Appeal – I'll look out especially for news from Market Harborough to feature in the LegionLetter special.

If you see a statue of a person on horseback, remember the following:

If the horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle.

If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle.

If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

*From the Manchester Guardian archive.
Originally published on 12 November 1919*

The First Two-minute Silence in Manchester

It may be doubted whether the great central streets of Manchester have ever before been so silent as they were for two minutes yesterday morning. Even during the dead hours of the night there is ordinarily some little stir of traffic, and on Sundays silence never completely falls.

Yesterday's silence was but the more impressive because it came in the presence of every conceivable possibility of commotion. The peace came out of tumult, and passed swiftly into tumult again.

The main streets were filled with people as eleven o'clock drew near. Many had come especially to be present on a unique occasion. It was remarkable with what quickness all noise was hushed when the dull explosion of the first maroon was heard. Horses were pulled up, tramcars stopped still where they stood, carts and motor-cars and pedestrians were as if suddenly fixed to the ground.

With instinctive accord, all the men standing along the thickly-lined streets bared their heads. While one might count perhaps a dozen there was not "any sound or motion." Then a more distant maroon was heard emphasising a silence that, like the Egyptian

darkness, might almost be felt. The faintest noises now took on the portentousness of the little noises that fill a quiet church.

A woman coughed fifty yards away; a baby gave a faint cry; one could not move a foot without self-consciousness. Here and there were persons crying quietly, women furtively drying their eyes. The street seemed the centre of a calm which one felt to be reaching out to an undefined circumference. One began to ponder whether a more wonderful idea than this had ever entered man's head; this simple, impressive "Be still, and know".

A horse's hoof suddenly struck a spark from the granite of the road; a tram bell clanged; and like a watercourse released from frost the traffic streams flowed noisily about the city.

In Albert Square at a quarter to eleven there was little to mark the day out from any other – only the flags flying half-mast from the Town Hall and one or two adjoining buildings, and a single line of people at the barriers which enclosed the maroon by the side of the Albert Memorial. A few minutes later groups had mounted all the climbable pedestals of the statues, and had begun to assemble by the main entrance of the Town Hall.

It was only in the last five minutes that the people came in their thousands – in swift-flowing streams from a dozen avenues, until nearly all the great space was filled. With the first chime of the big clock every head was bared.

throughout its life.

If a penguin is found dead on the ice surface, other members of the family and social circle have been known to dig holes in the ice, using their vestigial wings and beaks, until the hole is deep enough for the dead bird to be rolled into and buried

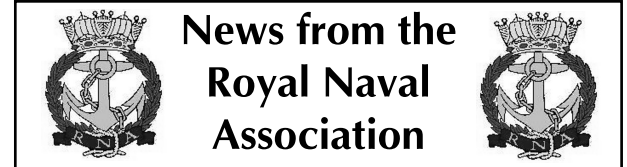
The male penguins then gather in a circle around the freshly-dug grave and sing....
"Freeze a jolly good fellow..."

Just a
Bit of
Fun

Did you ever wonder why you never see dead penguins on the ice in Antarctica? Ever wonder where they go? Wonder no more.

It is a known fact that the penguin is a very ritualistic bird which lives an extremely ordered and complex life.

The penguins have a very strong community bond. They are very committed to their family and will mate for life. They also maintain a form of compassionate contact with their offspring



The anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar was celebrated by the Market Harborough Royal Naval Association on Saturday evening. Sixty members and their guests sat down to a five course formal dinner at the Market Harborough Golf Club. The Chairman Mike Middleton and his wife Pat, the Guest of Honour Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, KCB, OBE Royal Navy and his wife Lady Anne Soar were piped in, and then clapped to their table by the assembled company.

Admiral Soar's post as CinC Fleet gives him full command of all deployable ships and submarines and Fleet units including the Royal Marines. He is responsible for ensuring that these units are ready in all respects for any operations requested by the Government. Admiral Soar gave an interesting insight in the events leading up to and during the battle of Trafalgar before proposing the Toast to The Immortal Memory.

A message from The Queen was delivered by Shipmate John Smith which heralded an order to 'Splice the Mainbrace'. This was toasted with the traditional tot of rum.

A Smart Lady

Barbara Walters, the American journalist, did a story on gender roles in Kabul, Afghanistan, several years before the Afghan conflict. She noted that women customarily walked five paces behind their husbands. She recently returned to Kabul and observed that women still walk behind their husbands.

Despite the overthrow of the oppressive Taliban regime, the women now seem happy to maintain the old custom. Ms Walters approached one of the Afghani women and asked, 'Why do you now seem happy with an old custom that you once tried so desperately to change?'

The woman looked Ms Walters in the eye and said, "Land mines".

A couple of years ago I was contacted by an American millionaire, Donald Soldini, who purchased a Dakota which was auctioned by the US Government. The aircraft had been impounded after being abandoned in Florida by drug runners who had hijacked it to escape from Cuba.

In the aircraft Donald found the log book which showed that the Dakota was ex-RAF and had been issued to South-East Asia Command as FL510 and had ostensibly been used to drop supplies to the Chindits in Burma. Donald Soldini was so interested in this Dakota that he organised a film crew to come to England to do some filming of similar aircraft at North Weald and Coventry.

He asked me and anyone I knew who had flown Dakotas to join him at the RAF Club in Piccadilly to recount wartime activities. One of the party was Group Captain Alec Blythe, the ex-CO of 233 Squadron and he also flew with 48 Squadron at Down Ampney.

The filming completed, Donald returned to the States and the project seemed to die. However, I recently heard from a film company in Florida which was producing the film and I was asked if I could be contacted for any further information.

By coincidence, I frequently talk with Tom Robinson who flew with 48 Squadron as a Wireless Operator Air Gunner and now lives in Ottawa. Tom told me that the father of Chris Bryant, an ex-RAF colleague, served as a pilot with the RAF in Burma and was a qualified aeronautical engineer. Chris told Tom that his father salvaged a Dakota, which had been abandoned after crashing in a swamp, and restored it to flying condition. By the most amazing coincidence the Dakota's number was FL510!

When I was researching this Dakota for Donald Soldini I could find no evidence that it had been issued to any of the Burma Dakota squadrons (31, 52, 194 or 267). I then discovered it had been allocated to Lord Louis Mountbatten as his own personal aircraft.

(Chris Bryant is currently writing a history of FL510 for *The Aeroplane* magazine.)

Douglas DC3 Dakota *FL510* **An Amazing Saga**

ALAN HARTLEY



The RAF Down Ampney Association is organised by Alan Hartley, who produces a newsletter from time to time. This article is taken from a recent issue and tells a fascinating riches-to-rags story of an RAF Dakota.

Branch Members may recall a talk given by Alan about Arnhem and its connection with RAF Down Ampney in Gloucestershire.

You may also have seen Alan recently in a BBC2 Timewatch programme, 'Coventrated', about the Coventry Blitz in November 1940. He was interviewed and filmed because, as a 16 year old ARP messenger, he was sent into Coventry at the height of the air raid in order to get an ambulance for a seriously injured ARP warden.

Another interesting facet of this exercise is that on the nose of the Dakota is written "Sister Ann", and we wondered who she could be. I wrote to Countess Lady Patricia Mountbatten, Lord Louis' daughter, who unfortunately was unable to help, but expressed her interest and requested that she be kept informed of any developments. The film company have promised to send me a DVD of their production.

An approach to the Imperial War Museum has produced quite a lot of valuable information, including a very good photograph of FL510 taken on the Arakan Front, depicting Sister Ann quite clearly on the nose.

A correspondence page from *Flight International* magazine in 2004 included a letter from G. Ann Ramsden confirming that she was indeed the Sister Ann on the nose of FL510. She refers to a conversation with a pilot in 1948 from East African Airways in Tanganyika to say that he had flown this particular Dakota but he thought it was no longer in service.

Sister Ann's letter was followed by one from a Denis Powell of Nairobi, who had seen a previous reference in *Flight* of FL510. He had written a full history of the aircraft from entering service at RAF Bassingbourn to being Struck off Charge at No 8 M.U. at Little Rissington, where she was credited to have flown 1,803 hours in 1954.

In the same information pack was an obituary printed in *The Independent* for Gertrude Ann Ramsden which told how she was a nurse on P&O liners before joining the Queen Alexander's Naval Nursing Reserve and how, after being posted to Burma, became a personal nurse to Lord Louis Mountbatten. She died in Preston, Lancs, on 30th November 2004 aged 97.

So ended a search which became more interesting the deeper I dug. All of this information has been passed to the American film producers who intend to incorporate her story.

Over the 35 years I have been organising our Association, I have received and dealt with many requests to carry out research. However, this has proved to be by far the most challenging and the most interesting.