



## The Editor Writes

I had planned to include a feature on the D-Day Anniversary in this issue but, as all the contributions are not to hand, I shall leave it until the July edition. The event was such a momentous turning-point in the course of the war, so I should like to make mention

of members who, whilst not concerned with the actual invasion, were nonetheless contributing to the war effort at home or overseas. I am trying to make the feature as comprehensive as possible, so if you can let me know where you were and what you were doing on June 6th, 1944, I should be very grateful. (My contact details are on the cover.)

Inevitably, Members, as well as many other Harborians, are concerned about the future of the War Memorial, if and when development of the Cottage Hospital site takes place. It will be seen in this month's concluding part of Tom Ashmore's interesting piece on the Memorial, that correspondence from the NHS Trust authorities gives full assurances. As stated in July 2001, the RBL and others will be approached and, indeed, consultations with the Trust are taking place. Meanwhile, Members can be sure that the Branch Committee has this important matter under constant review.

It has been a pleasure to welcome Kathy Davies, despite her health problems, at the last two Branch meetings. Kathy has had an interesting life and her account of a particularly poignant time during the war is featured this month. I will take this opportunity to make a plea for your stories, anecdotes, photographs, letters, or comments on articles appearing in this newsletter. After all, this should be a two-way means of communication. So, please keep *In Touch!*

Incidentally, when you go on holiday, look out for unusual picture postcards (views, not naughty ones). I am hoping to have a competition on the lines of 'Where on earth is this?' later in the year.

mechanical failure. The pilot, Flight Sergeant Geoffrey Appleyard, had done several sorties and 1000 bomber raids. He was wearing my pink pinafore, his air gunner carried his girlfriend's bra, and other crew members had their mascots.

I go to that ghastly sea bank sometimes, the concrete look-out post is still there, and a lot of barbed wire, too. I look out on the stillness of that countryside-cum-coastline and simply 'Remember them'. I also used to visit the little cemetery at Coningsby, lying alongside the aerodrome. Five of the crew are buried there and at peace in that little part of England. I feel sure they had died as they had lived, happy, brave, even carefree young men when not flying, doing their duty that we might live and remember them.

IN MEMORY OF  
Flight-Sergeant Pilot  
GEOFFREY APPELYARD, D.F.M.  
106 SQUADRON, R.A.F.  
DIED JULY 26th, 1942.

A gallant lad in every way,  
Whether at work or at play,  
Time will pass and memory dim,  
But somehow, there will be thoughts of him  
Come stealing into the mind unbidden  
Of brave deeds done, which were always hidden,  
In a laugh, a joke, a kindly gesture  
To fellow men, who shared his pleasure,  
Losing such as you is hard, .  
We salute you, "Geoffrey Appleyard";  
You gave your life for Freedom's sway.  
In grateful remembrance, this tribute we pay.

M.E.G.  
August 22nd, 1942

*Poem for a memorial card composed by a friend.*

But death brings hope, and it has brought me pleasure I became acquainted with Geoff's relations at the funeral and his Mother became Godmother to my son. His niece, who was born some years after his accident, is my Goddaughter. Recently her husband and son visited me. I had a few tears after they left – sixty-two years on and they remembered me, as well.



*Leading Wren Davies K  
January 1943*

I joined the services, the Women's Royal Naval Service in fact, to do my part for the war effort, as those fine young airman friends of mine had done.

Now, back to the questions and the next one is easy. I didn't marry a parish priest, who became Canon of Lincoln, but a handsome young officer in the Welch Guards. We were in each other's company for a total of just nineteen hours before our marriage, and then had over fifty-one happy years together. He saw action in North Africa and Italy, returning with malaria, dysentery and shell shock. But, fortunately not too shocked to marry me, although I think my Father-in-law would have preferred a Welsh girl!

The last question is better not answered. The reason for my disability is unknown, but in my twilight years, life is not as easy as it was during my years in the Wrens.



**Poppy Race Day** This is a great day out at a reasonable cost. Please contact Joan McMillin as soon as possible to make your booking.

**Our Padre** The Rev Moody will be installed as Canon at Leicester Cathedral next month.

**Royal Leicestershire Regiment** The RBL County Office will support an appeal by the Regiment following the cancellation of a concert planned for the same evening as the Legion's Festival of Remembrance.

**The Art of Topiary** As part of Harborough in Bloom, two 'lions' have been planted at the War Memorial. The wording on accompanying plaques is under discussion with our Chairman.

**Army Cadet Affiliation** A letter of appreciation has been received from the Harborough Detachment Commander, Staff Sergeant Marriott, following the Affiliation Ceremony.

**The Late Honor Dugdale** A donation of £135, to go to the Poppy Appeal, has been received in lieu of floral tributes at Honor's funeral.

**Poppy Appeal Plans** A full report will appear in July.

**Sgt Stan Snow** On a visit to Normandy, Stan, who landed with the SAS Special Forces, was presented with a commemorative badge by the mayor of Lux.

**Our Glenys** Back in hospital yet again for a further spell of treatment, Glenys Hocking-Davies would certainly welcome a cheery message from you. Please send your letters and cards to her in the Haematology Ward, Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester, LE1 5WW.

**Portakabin Poppy Store** Planning permission having been received, the green-painted unit has been ordered, at a cost within budgetary limitations, and is due for delivery to the Rugby Club site by the end of June.



## The Diary

*Details of all Social Events are available from Joan McMillin on MH 462143. Joan welcomes your ideas for events, outings, etc.*

### SOME DATES TO KEEP FREE

- 10 July Beaumanor Hall Open-air concert (Tickets £15)
- 20 July Branch Lunch at the Angel
- 31 July Poppy Race Day at Doncaster (Tickets £20)
- 14 Aug Lutterworth RBL Band Concert St Mary's Church 19.30
- 19 Sept Cotswold Coach Tour - Half proceeds to Branch
- 2 Oct Branch Annual Dinner - MH Golf Club
- 6 Nov Festival of Remembrance Concert - De Montfort Hall
- 6 Nov Branch Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre
- 8 Nov Poppy Appeal Gala Evening - Harborough Theatre
- 13 Nov MH Band Remembrance Concert - Methodist Church

**The date of the next meeting is July 14**

Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the downstairs Function Room, Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The Branch Committee meets on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.30 pm in the upstairs Committee Room at the Conservative Club.



**The Royal British Legion**

Reg. Charity 219279

**Market Harborough Branch**

Founded in 1923

**Branch Website**  
[www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net](http://www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net)



# In Touch

Issue 69

June 2004

Editor

George Seward : 01858 433873  
18 Charles Street,  
Market Harborough, LE16 9AB  
e-mail : [g.seward@btinternet.com](mailto:g.seward@btinternet.com)

In Touch *on-line*  
[www.in-touch.ukvet.net](http://www.in-touch.ukvet.net)

**Branch Contact Numbers**  
*Welfare*

Barry Peck : 01858 440513  
Vida Edwards : 0116 279 3729

*Hon. Secretary*  
Betty Ramsay: 01858 434923

## The War Memorial at the Cottage Hospital Part 2 - Tom Ashmore

Now, 83 years after Mr Roe's dream, the alternative to his town centre "handsome building of fine dimensions and architecture" is under threat in the Coventry Road and public concern at the loss of the Cottage Hospital has been vigorously expressed. One may wonder what would be the strength of the opposition today if his Free Library and Reading Room had been built and now faced demolition or redevelopment. Doubtless there would have been an outcry from ex-service people and others at the loss of something built "in gallant recognition of those who have served" in the Great War just as there has been over the hospital. Would there have been those who argued that the whole "handsome building" was the Memorial and must be preserved or those who said that so long as the panels with the inscribed names were saved that would be sufficient?

What has happened in today's real world is that the Market Harborough Branch of the Royal British Legion has taken up the "Save our Memorial" cause. The pragmatic view has been taken that it is unrealistic to expect the whole of the 1924 extension to be preserved because it was built (and paid for) as the "Memorial Wing". However, removing the name panels from their setting would not be acceptable. Thus, the Legion position is that if the hospital building itself has to be redeveloped or demolished, that the "War Memorial" which must be preserved is the whole of the portico with the name panels in their existing settings and the bronze inscription plaques, not just the panels.

In writing to the Healthcare Trust, the Legion<sup>3</sup> asked for the assurance of the Chief Executive that he accepted its definition of the Memorial and that the Trust would be responsible for the cost of preservation even if this meant relocating the portico and making it into an independent structure. Support from the public was sought from influential individuals and organisations through a

press release to local newspapers and their subsequent coverage of the campaign. The response was most encouraging and there was a sympathetic but generalised statement in the press that Melton, Rutland & Harborough Primary Healthcare Trust regard the memorial as "an important record of historical and human significance..." and... "wishes to see the memorial protected and will be guided by the views of local people and the local council as to where it should be sited in the future".

Later the specific assurances sought were received in a letter<sup>4</sup> from the NHS Trust on the two key issues:

- "That the War Memorial includes all of the portico that encloses the Memorial panels."
- "It is also the Trust's intention to fully fund the reposition of the War Memorial"

In his letter dated 11th July 2001, the Acting Chief Executive added the further undertaking that, "At a very early stage in the resiting process, organisations such as the Royal British Legion, will be approached for advice on the moving of the Memorial, and its location."

This NHS Trust response is reassuring but, although it may be quite a long time before anything happens to the hospital site, the Market Harborough Branch of the Royal British Legion will remain alert to developments and will seek to ensure that the Trust's undertakings are honoured.

One of the organisations which offered help and support was "Friends of War Memorials"<sup>3</sup>, a "registered charity dedicated to promoting awareness of the debt we owe to those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom". Its formal objectives are:

1. To monitor the condition and state of repair of war memorials and to take steps to ensure that local authorities and other relevant organisations are alerted to such condition with a view to their undertaking any necessary cleaning, restoration, maintenance, repairs and renovations.
2. To liaise with ecclesiastical authorities, regiments and other responsible bodies with a view to their accepting

responsibility for, and undertaking repairs and renovations of, war memorials.

3. To educate, inform and publicise the spiritual, archaeological and historical significance of war memorials as part of our national heritage, to encourage support groups and to inspire young people to cherish their local war memorials and the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in the cause of freedom."

This is an influential body with an impressive list of patrons, supporters and sponsors. They have helped to ensure the preservation of War Memorials abroad as well as in this country. Relocation is a quite usual option and schools have provided some sites, something the "Friends" are keen to encourage. Examples of projects undertaken are described on their well produced and most interesting website [www.war-memorials.com](http://www.war-memorials.com).

In due course we may be able to log-on to read a report on what happened to something that was part of a Hospital but might have been part of a Free Library and Reading Room.

### References

1. *Market Harborough Advertiser* 31st December 1918 page 4
2. *Market Harborough Advertiser* 27th September 1921 ("COMMITTEE AND OFFICIALS") page 8
3. Market Harborough RBL Correspondence Files - letters dated 16/4/0,3/5/01
4. Market Harborough RBL Correspondence Files - letter dated 27/7/01
5. [www.war-memorials.com](http://www.war-memorials.com)

(This paper was submitted by Tom Ashmore to the Market Harborough Historical Society and published in the September 2002 edition of 'The Harborough Historian'.)

**'But, Death Brings Hope'**  
**Some reflections on her life by**  
**KATHLEEN DAVIES**

I have lived a long life and, during that time, I have been asked many questions, but three stand out. Why did I join the services? Why did I marry a parish priest? Why am I disabled? The first two are comparatively easy to answer.

A famous aerodrome was situated not many miles from my home and my sister and I knew many of the airmen at RAF Coningsby. They were being shot down, reported missing or becoming prisoners of war. My pilot friend was in love with his Lancaster and he loved flying. The excitement of fear got his adrenaline running and he wanted his night's operation to be successful. I always knew when he was going on 'ops', he would phone me using a secret code, simply saying, "I'm happy". I would hear the planes going over about midnight and I was always anxious.

We were both twenty years old, carefree and happy. He and his crew would often stay the night at my home. He would put on my pink pinafore, make egg and chips, and raid my parents' drink cupboard. One special concoction he named after me, a cocktail he called 'Kath's Folly'!

My sister Joan and I would take breakfast up to these boys in bed, usually five or six of them, and my Mother would shout out, "don't be long in there, you girls, it only takes a few minutes to pop a tray in". Joan and I were very naïve, we'd had a fairly sheltered upbringing and there was excitement in the air. They taught us to smoke, to drink, to dance with them and to skate in the glider-drome. We had fun. My parents were strict, but considered there was safety in numbers, and they were really a great little crowd. I remember one evening when a young airman came to meet me to tell me my air gunner friend had not 'made it' and he was taking me out. This was true comradeship.

I was sending parcels to various Stalagluft camps and I thought of the German pen friend I'd had before the war. He had often sent me picture postcards of German cities and Hitler Youth camps. The cards were sent to the War Office after I had listened to an appeal on the wireless. He was a Hitler Youth leader and in my innocence I thought it was rather like the Boy Scout movement. In one of his letters written in perfect English – and better



*Flt Sgt Pilot  
 Geoffrey  
 Appleyard  
 1921-1942.*

*Having refused  
 a commission  
 he was  
 posthumously  
 awarded the  
 Distinguished  
 Flying Medal.*

than mine – he asked me to send him English newspapers. My parents had refused to let me. He also asked if he and a friend could come and camp in our garden, but again they refused.

The night of July 26<sup>th</sup> 1942 will live with me forever. I was awoken by a terrific noise and looked out of my bedroom window to see the sky was a brilliant red glow. My heart sank and somehow I seemed to know what I had so often feared. My parent and I dressed quickly and went to the scene only a mile away on the North Sea coast at Benington, near Boston. I didn't know then, but the crashed Lancaster bomber, loaded with bombs, had a

**County Review**

**Items of Interest from the  
 Leicestershire & Rutland RBL County Circular**

**60th Anniversary of VE and VJ** Plans are being made for celebrations on the weekend of 9/10 July, 2005. There will be a carnival in Leicester's Victoria Park on Saturday and a Cathedral service on Sunday.

**County Field Officer** It is announced with regret that Mark Melaugh will be leaving to take up a position with Age Concern.



**The Welfare  
 Support Team**

John Liddell expressed concern that the number of Caseworkers in Northants, Leics and Rutland had fallen from 145 to 80. He pointed out that in every two-year period Caseworkers must attend a full briefing and a refresher update.

Dougie McMeeken spoke of a campaign to be mounted shortly by the East Midlands War Pensions Committee to identify various agencies.

Three cases had been passed to the team because SSAFA was unable to handle them.

**Membership Directory**

*Please note the following amendments:*

*Change of address:*

**Marriott** Mr A W (Andrew) Flat 1, Aldwinckles Yard, Market Harborough LE16 7AL (same telephone number).

*We welcome two members from other branches:*

**07957 250935 Marsden** Mr A W (Andrew) 24 Bramfield Park, Lubenham, LE16 9TP.

**01858 545560 Walker** Mr J G (John) Langton Hall Farm, West Langton, Market Harborough, LE16 7TZ.