

For Your Diary

- 2 Aug Millennium team meeting – 7.30pm
- 8 Aug* Branch Lunch - Wheel and Compass, Weston-by-Welland. Note this is definitely on, now that more people have signed up!
- 9 Aug Branch Meeting + Buffet
- 10 Aug Coffee morning at Joyce Stimpson's home, Jays Cottage, Tur Langton
- 12 Aug Unveiling of Canal Basin Sundial – 11.30am. (one of the Sundial's hour markers is of particular RBL interest)
- 25 Aug* Beer & Skittles - Old Crown, Fleckney
More people needed to make this viable. Do come- it's great fun!
- 30 Aug Branch Committee Meeting
- 3 Sep* 5 day Holiday in Normandy
- 13 Sep Branch Meeting + social event
- 13 Oct* Annual Dinner M H Golf Club (details later)
- 28 Oct* Coffee Morning M H Theatre in aid of the Poppy Appeal.
- 4 Nov Remembrance 2000 (the new name for the de Montfort Hall Festival of Remembrance)
- 8-12 Nov Millennium Festival Week and Poppy Appeal activities
- 15Dec* Xmas Dinner (details later)
- * For details or to book please contact Bob England (MH 464288)

Mr B The Barber

14 St Mary's Road
Market Harborough, LE16 7DU

Appointments Available
Phone (01858) 464308

You are invited

to join a group of Ashley Branch members (subject to seats still being available) on the Market Harborough Travel "D-Day Beaches and WW2 Battlefields" Tour from Sunday, 1st to Thursday, 5th October. Price about £200. Contact Alec Marlow on MH 555679. This has a somewhat different itinerary from the Normandy holiday which Bob England has arranged.

Calling all Computer Users

If you have your own computer, use one at work or are considering buying one, Mark Hudson (e-mail mrhudson@4uNet.co.uk or phone MH 434436) would like to hear from you. It has been suggested that as a group, you could help one another and also find ways of ensuring that the Branch benefits from greater use of Information Technology.

Meetings

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

The next meeting is on 9th August and will be followed by a finger buffet and the chance of an informal chat with fellow members. Do try to involve those who have joined more recently.

Mr & Mrs F T Ashmore
9 The Pastures
Market Harborough
Leics.
LE16 9EA



Reg. Charity No. 219279

The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch Founded in 1923



In Touch

Issue 26

July, 2000.

Editor -- Ray Tyler
9 Poplars Court
Market Harborough, LE16 7BU.
Tel: 01858 461889

Branch Internet Web site at
<http://www.mktharborrbl.ukvet.net>

Editorial

I can't imagine that many people get invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, and especially being invited by e-mail. That is exactly what happened to two of our members. They insist that it was an Honour to the Branch.

Another invitation was to the home of Sir Michael Carlton-Smith and Lady Penny for our July meeting. It was a most pleasant evening. New members Sir Michael and Kath Noble both received their membership badges.

In the July, 1999 issue David Groves' article was headed "A Vote of Thanks to the 8th Hussars". In this issue there is a fascinating sequel to that event.

Could anything be more pleasant than "Music for a Summers Evening" at Beaumanor Hall, organised, as usual, by the Quorn Branch? We were represented by our Standard Bearer and two members.

The twelve members of the Branch who visited Duxford were very impressed but Bob England was disappointed that so few had booked. Such social events must be better supported if they are to continue and they are so enjoyable.

Mark Hudson wishes to get a group of us together who have computers - not necessarily those on the Internet - but all with an interest in computers would be welcome.

I received an interesting "Letter to the Editor" from Bill Cotton. Thank you Bill. And could I have some from the rest of you please!



The Three Swans Hotel
A unique, superbly renovated 500 year old coaching inn
The perfect visiting place...

- ◆ Ideal for a comfortable overnight touring stop - even better for a longer stay.
- ◆ Morning coffee, lunches and tea in either the Conservatory or Lounge Bar, with courtyard dining this summer.
- ◆ Elegant silver service restaurant awarded AA rosettes for good food and wine.
- ◆ Attractive function rooms and private dining rooms for meetings and celebrations.

High Street, Market Harborough, Leics LE16 7NJ
Phone 01858 465644 Fax 01858 433101

**Service and Products
designed for YOU**



**MARKET
HARBOROUGH**
BUILDING SOCIETY
Traditional values in a changing world

Welland House, The Square,
Market Harborough, Leics. LE16 7PD.
Tel: (01858) 463244
Member of the Building Societies Association

The County Jewellers

WATCH, CLOCK & JEWELLERY
SALES & REPAIRS

OUR SPECIALITY IS TO CREATE
YOUR OWN DESIGNER JEWELLERY

**56 High Street
Market Harborough
Tel: (01858) 462773**



We thank all the local Businesses which support us by paying for advertising space in this Newsletter.

R.D. JEACOCK & SONS LTD.

Established 1955

20 Coventry Rd., Mkt Harborough Tel: 01858 463082

TV - VIDEO - AUDIO - HI FI

Authorised Main Dealers for

Panasonic SONY
J.V.C. ROBERTS

FRANK GILBERT'S

for all your

HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS

**HOUSEWARE &
COOKWARE**

Specialists

50 HIGH ST., MARKET HARBOROUGH
Tel: 01858 462148

CHINA and GLASSWARE SPECIALISTS

WHITEMORES

opposite the Parish Church and Old Grammar School
Market Harborough
Phone 462945

Wedgewood • Aynsley • Crown Derby
Doulton • Lladro/Nao • Caithness Glass
Swarovski Crystal • Masons Ironstone
Royal Scot Crystal • Lilliput Cottages
Coalport • Portmeirion

East Midlands Regional Office is closing on 31st August and so Chris Wood, R O assistant, will be leaving. Those of us who have had the pleasure of seeking her help will miss her cheerful, friendly voice and we wish her well for the future.

County Handbook. This annual publication contains information about all RBL and RBL Women's Section branches and RBL Clubs in Leicestershire and Rutland including meeting venues and times. Names, addresses & phone numbers of branch and County office holders and some of other relevant organisations are given. A full, almost verbatim report of the Annual County Conference occupies over half of this comprehensive 128 page (2000 edition) pocket size book. The branch has a few spare copies – ring Tom Ashmore (MH 433108) if you would like one.

Ashley Branch Success. In a recent letter from Secretary/Treasurer, Margaret Prince, our branch is thanked for supporting their "Teas at Medbourne" fundraising effort which yielded the marvellous sum of £473. A further £144 was raised at the Ashley Village Weekend. As Margaret says, "Amounts like this make the effort we put into it so rewarding". Well done, Ashley!

Telephone Fraud. There is a new warning of a fraud by which someone else's calls are charged to your bill. If you receive a call purporting to be from the phone engineers asking you to key in a certain number for a test, **do not do so.**

Picture of a Sunny Afternoon in July

By Joan Ashmore

A kaleidoscope of colour cascades gently onto immaculate green lawns. Slowly processing along the gravelled paths the people move. Then gradually some stay sitting on seats scattered under shading trees. The rest move on towards two stands sheltering the bands who play alternately throughout the afternoon, and forward to the blue and white marquees, the tea room ready for the visitors enjoying the warmth of Summer's presence here.

We sit and watch the ladies streaming by in mint green or lilac, gorgeous blues, hot cerise or orange, black or tan, every colour accented by great hats, small, large and some outrageous.

The men more sober wearing morning suits and hats of black or grey and uniforms, all kinds and formal lounge suits too. Folks from Britain and abroad each with his own experience of life are gathered here.

And so we sit and people watch and then the splendid Yeomen of the Guard in red and gold march to guard Her Majesty and all those diplomatic guests partaking of their teas.

We join the crowd to watch our Queen depart, a picture in bright yellow and lime green and clap her on her way. And then ourselves depart thanking all those who helped to make us part of this picture of a sunny afternoon. Ω

Joan & Tom Ashmore had the honour of being invited to the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 20th July. Editor

A Vote of Thanks to The 8th Hussars - Follow up.

by David Grove. M.B.E.

If you remember a story under the above heading published in the July 1999 issue of In Touch you may be interested to know the outcome. A copy of the story was sent to the Regimental Association of The Queens Royal Irish Hussars, and as a result the following facts have come to light-

The two Centurion tanks which came to my aid that day in November 1951 were, White 3 commanded by Lt. C B D Troughton, who was awarded a Military Cross for his conduct in support of "The Leicesters" attack on 5th November 1951 and White 3 Charlie commanded by Cpl Williams. His gunner, Tpr Dominic Hall and the wireless operator (name unknown) were wounded by mortar fire as they helped to place the "The Leicesters" wounded on their tank engine deck.

I have been able to speak to (Gunner) Dominic Hall on the telephone, thank him for his gallant help and say how sorry I am now, that my demand for help delayed their withdrawal and placed them all in such danger.

Dominic received severe wounds to the spine and head and was medivac'd to the Australian Ward of the Military Hospital, Kure, Japan on 7th November. Truth is stranger than fiction. This was the same ward to which I was admitted on 18th November after being wounded on the 11th! Unknown to each other until 50 years later we had shared another experience! Ω

Music, Picnic and Fireworks

By Tom Ashmore

In recent years these informal open air Summer evening entertainments have become quite popular. They usually take the form of an open air concert held in the grounds of a stately home or similar venue at which the audience brings their own picnic food and drinks. One arrives early in order to secure a good pitch on which to set up ones gear. Most people come in groups of family or friends and bring table, chairs, cutlery, crockery, glasses, rugs, warm clothing, umbrellas, etc. etc. so it is interesting to see hundreds of people as they trek from their cars laden with this paraphernalia. Unless you have attended one of these evenings you would think this was ridiculous, but it is all part of the relaxed, friendly, informal atmosphere - and the concert can be good, too!!

On 15th July, the grounds of Beaumanor Hall near Loughborough were a perfect setting for the "Music for a Summer Evening". This was the sixth occasion on which Quorn branch had organised the event to raise funds for the four major ex-service charities, the Poppy Appeal, the Benevolent funds of the R.N., Army and RAF

The Leicester Symphony Orchestra with the trumpeters of the Coldstream Guards & soprano Alessandra Testai gave a concert of popular music including such favourites as the Radradetsky March, Jerusalem and Rule Britannia. Standards from 12 Leicestershire Branches, including Market Harborough, marched through the arena to the strains of Old Comrades with George Fleming looking as smart as ever. The evening concluded with a the 1812 overture accompanied by a magnificent firework display.



The organisation of the event was highly professional and the members of Quorn branch who were involved are to be congratulated. It was especially pleasing to hear that Geoffrey Gibson who has been the leading light in all these and many others events in, and outside the branch, had been awarded the M.B.E. for services to the community and Quorn branch.

Continued from page 5

July Branch Meeting. The 26 members who attended the July meeting will know what a pleasant occasion it was and how welcome we were all made to feel by Sir Michael Carlton-Smith and Lady Penny. Drinks offered on arrival and later during the evening helped to create a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The meeting was held in the dining room with Chairman, Con Halsall, gavel at the ready, at the head of the table. New Membership Badges were presented to Kath Noble and, appropriately, to Sir Michael.

Following a commendably short business session, Sir Michael gave a most interesting talk starting with how his family came to Drayton, eventually bought the village pub, which they transformed into the now delightful Plough Cottage. The Carlton-Smith's are a military family and for the whole of the last 100 years, at least one of them has been a serving Army officer. Not surprisingly, the house contains some fascinating military memorabilia, much of which we were able to see after the talk. From his own long, varied and successful Service career, Sir Michael entertained us with several amusing incidents. After leaving the Army, he was very actively involved with the Marie Curie Charity and until recently was Chairman of the Leicester Royal Infirmary Hospital Trust.

President, Peter Wilson's words of thanks clearly expressed the thoughts of all members present, who showed their appreciation with warm applause.

What did you do in the War, Daddy?

By Ray Tyler

Early in 1940 when I was 16 my Father was called up. He was R.N.R., and so I decided I wanted to join the Navy rather than the other services. I lived in London, but was told if I came to Glasgow there was a job for me as Royal Naval Auxiliary Personnel, so I cycled the 400 miles in four days.

I joined an A.M.C., a well armed large merchant ship for use on convoy work. In the early days I slept in a hammock. It was explained to me that you never fell out of a hammock, which was true, no matter what the weather did. For about three years we escorted convoys across the Atlantic but I think we only used our depth charges on two occasions, and I never saw any sign of a Jerry Sub. When you think of the size of the Atlantic Ocean it must have been really bad luck if you rubbed shoulders with a Jerry Sub, although my mate was lost at sea when his ship (another A.M.C.) was sunk.

One thing we did not get was news from home, except by mail. I don't remember hearing a radio. I believe there was radio silence at sea. This came home to me one day when I received mail from my Mother. Because my Father and I often landed at Glasgow after one of our voyages, my Mother rented a house in Glasgow leaving our real home in London. She wrote and said that our London home had been bombed and everything had been lost. My reply was "Why should Jerry pick on us?" My Mother's reply came explaining about the 1000 bomber raids on London and Coventry.

I certainly just didn't know. And I now realise that the same thing applies to so much of the war.

Our pick up points for the convoys were many wonderful towns and cities - St. John and Halifax in Canada, Reykjavik in Iceland, Bermuda, Freetown in Sierra Leone and many others. Usually we went ashore as we did when we arrived in the Clyde, Southampton or the Mersey. Sounds like a world tour, doesn't it?

After leaving the A.M.C., I was sent to Asbury Park in New Jersey not far from New York. I discovered that I was to join a brand new small aircraft-carrier at Portland in Oregon on the other side of America. Then came the BUT - BUT it would not be ready for several months. I had a wonderful time in the States before arriving in Portland. With the help of American Servicemen we stored the ship and sailed away. But not for the Atlantic. We proceeded in the Pacific and sent a shore party on some island to pick up some Vichy French VIPs, as Prisoners of War.



I know no more than that, except that one day I said "bon jour" to one of them. I did speak good French. I was up before the Commander for saying that but I explained that I was only being courteous. The Commander almost shouted "Don't you realise that they are the enemy?"

We came home through the Panama Canal, and finished up in British Waters training pilots to land on small carriers. We had many crashes and some pilots were killed. The thing I hated most was burials at sea.

On one occasion we went to a West African Port, and having a cool room on board, I bought a stem of bananas - several hands. When taking them home to my Mother on the bus I was asked by a small boy "what are they". I explained and asked his mother if he would like one. I gave him one which he tasted - he threw it on the floor and trod on it. He said that he did not like it!!! My mother distributed the remainder to all the neighbours. They had never seen bananas during the war. Those Neighbours were at Easington in County Durham where my Father, who had been discharged from the Navy for health reasons, was manager of a Bevin Boys' Hostel.

I was demobbed in March 1946 after 6 years in the Royal Navy. For this they gave me four medals including the Atlantic Star and the Pacific Star.

That is what I did in the War. Not much compared with so many people whom I have met since. Ω