

For Your Diary

- 18th July** Branch Coffee Morning at the Harborough Theatre 9.30 - 12.00. Bring your friends for a "cuppa", the Tombola and the Cake Stall.
- 29th July** Branch Committee Meeting
- 8th August** RNA Bric-a-Brac Stall at Market Harborough Market Hall. Bargains from the Sea-chests?
- 9th August** Trip to Hastings (see p17)
- 11th August** War Pensioners' Outing (see p4 for details)
- 12th August** Branch Meeting and a Talk by Mark Hudson, the "Peace-time" sailor, they called an Electrician!
- 16-18th Aug.** Edinburgh Tattoo Visit
A few places may still be available. Ring Tom Jeacock (MH 466829) for details.
- 29th August** Branch Coffee Morning at the Harborough Theatre. Includes a Bric-a-Brac Stall
- 2nd Sept.** Visit to RBL Poppy Factory
See p2 - Early booking essential !!
- 20th Sept.** Battle of Britain Parade & Service, Leicester. Details in August issue of *In Touch, Too*.
- 2nd October** Anniversary Dinner -Ring Tom Jeacock (MH 466829) to book.
- 24th October** Festival of Remembrance & Black Dyke Mills Band at Derngate Theatre. Ring John Cox (MH434983) ASAP to book.
- 31st October** Festival of Remembrance at De Montfort Hall, Leicester. Details later.
- 7th November** Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall - For details or to book ring Andrew Marriott (MH 434805)

David Hawke runs T.A.C.T., *Trips and Charity Tours*, to raise money for local worthy causes.

His trip on Sunday, 9th August is to **HASTINGS (it's Carnival Week)**.

Depart MH Market Hall 7.45am, back by 7.45pm. Cost **£8.00**.

Ring David on MH 466193 for details. Please support this hard working fellow Branch member, who has promised another donation to Branch funds.

Mr B His & Hers

Hair Fashions

14 St. Mary's Road
Market Harborough

Tel: (01858) 464308

APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

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.

At the next meeting, on **12th August**, after the usual short business session, Mark Hudson will talk about his unusual career in the "Peace-time" Royal Navy (being mindful of the Official Secrets Act). Do come!!



Reg. Charity No. 219279

The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch

1923 - 1998

75
Years of Caring

In Touch

Issue 14

July, 1998.

Editor -- Dick Fulford
67 Northleigh Grove, Market Harborough,
LE16 9QU. Tel: 01858 431515

Assistant Editor -- Bernard Halsall
22 Welland Court, Stamford Close,
Market Harborough, LE16 9ED.

Tel: 01858 465314

Editorial

In our 12th Issue we asked if *In Touch* was appreciated by readers. Subsequent response has been heartening for it appears that it is certainly being read and judging from the lack of criticism there is little wrong with it! The Editors, however, would always welcome comments, good or not so good, so keep in touch.



There follows another light hearted story from "Hotspur" which should produce a chuckle. His material is so popular, but why does he us that nom de plume? Webster's dictionary says Hotspur is "a rash, hot headed man"! He certainly isn't!

The 1998 visit of our town's A.T.C. Squadron to Ypres and the Menin Gate is well recorded by John Standish and we are sure our members will be heartened by his Cadets' involvement.

This 14th Issue's "I was there" story is from Fred Reed. We imagine he would rather not have been there on that special day in Burma.

What a pleasant poem Jack Stimpson has written for us and it is good to know there are more to come.

The very full diary of events and the items in the News pages shows that the Branch certainly is making progress.

Please keep articles and letters coming in. You have done really well recently. Thank you all!



The Three Swans Hotel

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

- ◆ Ideal for a comfortable overnight staying at up - even better for a longer stay.
- ◆ Morning coffee, lunches and teas in elegant Conservatory or Lounge Bar, with courtyard dining this summer.
- ◆ Elegant silver service restaurant awarded AA rosette 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 466644 Fax 01858 431101

R.D. JEACOCK & SONS LTD.

Established 1955

20 Coventry Rd., Mid Harborough Tel: 01858 463092

TV - VIDEO - AUDIO - HI FI

Authorised Main Dealers for

Panasonic SONY
J.V.C. ROBERTS

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



MOWERS

CROMWELL MOWERS

Garden Machines Specialists
Sales-Service-Spares

FREE professional advice, warranty work undertaken, all work guaranteed, collection & delivery.

5% discount to RBL members on all purchases, on production of membership card.

33 - 35 St. Mary's Road
Tel: (01858) 467589



FRANK GILBERT'S

for all your

HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS

HOUSEWARE & COOKWARE

Specialists

50 HIGH ST., MARKET HARBOROUGH
Tel: 01858 462148

Navigation

by Hotspur

Far be it for me, who started out with the Poor Blessed Infantry, and spent most of the next six years marching from A to B, then back to A, to mention the delicate matter of Navigation. This subject has been the domain of seafaring men (and women) since time immemorial. With a simple glimpse at the sun or some obscure star they can pinpoint their position with unfailing accuracy. And during this present century this same art has been acquired by those who fly their magnificent machines through, below or above vast banks of cloud. All of which is quite outside an infantryman's range and comprehension.

And so it would have remained for me but for the intervention of the Market Harborough Branch of The Royal British Legion. In their great wisdom and inventiveness they organised a Canal Boat trip, and therefore made it necessary for one or two of us to attend the Advanced School of Navigation, and so fully equipped to cope with the numerous Navigational problems that were to confront us "on the day".

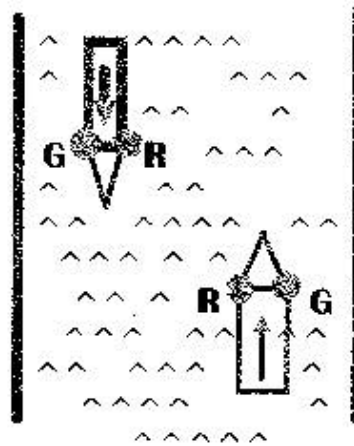
It was whilst on this course (Class N - Canal Boats) that I learnt that a red light was indicating the left side - or Port for the technically minded, whilst a green light indicated the right-hand side, or Starboard. I had always considered these lights to be pure decoration, and realised how clever the seafaring people had been. Towards the end of the course, to help us not confuse ourselves with

these various colours, the instructor gave us a little ditty to remember for safety reasons;

Green to Green, Red to Red.

Perfect safety - go ahead.

Along with this ditty he issued us with an explanatory diagram, as illustrated below



In this example the rule is Red to Red.

My colleagues from Market Harborough and myself were the sole survivors from this course. With great foresight we had taken the ditty and the diagram with us on our "passing - out" sail, and we were able to get onto our correct position on the approach of an oncoming canal boat. The rest of the course sank and drowned in a head-on crash. Days later, floating amid the wreckage they found this ditty written on Navigation paper:

Green to Red - Red to Green

Full Speed ahead, and go between.

RIP

News

Visit to Poppy Factory. Six members have already accepted the invitation from Great Glen Women's Section to join their trip to Richmond on Wednesday, 2nd September. The cost is £6. Pick-up in MH, time to be advised. Four seats remain. To reserve yours ring Tom Ashmore on MH 433108 ASAP.

In Touch, a model newsletter! This is the view expressed by our County President, Lt Col Roffey at the recent County Half-Year Conference, when he congratulated Market Harborough for producing such a high quality, readable publication. Both he and County Chairman, Tony Griffith would like more branches to produce newsletters and Chairman, Tom Ashmore had been asked to talk about our experience in launching and running this form of internal communication. Past issues of *In Touch* and *In Touch Too*, were made available to those present. Will other Branches follow our lead?

Our Prize-winning Internet Web Site. Mark Hudson's creative design has been awarded a prize in an international competition. When this was announced at the July Branch meeting members gave Mark a round of applause and agreed that except when an author stated otherwise, any contribution to *In Touch* could be published on the web-site (and in other Legion Newsletters - suitably credited).

Trumpet Blowing. It is nice to receive an accolade, but why should we wait to be told that ours is a good branch? To encourage new members to join and to stay with us, a new leaflet has been produced to portray the branch as active, innovative, caring and friendly, "Proud of the Past. Ready for the Future". Copies were available to the public at the Carnival, are now in the Library and will be at any future events in which the branch is involved. It should also remind each member why ours is a good branch!

More Praise! It is a great pleasure to be able to offer our congratulations to our friends The Harborough Band for the honour they received in being invited to perform on the occasion of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Concert. They played for two hours whilst the audience were arriving for the main concert so their music was heard by 15,000 people!

Twelve Bargees!! The June Branch Luncheon was very different from previous occasions. For example, the participants assembled at 8.45am and eventually dispersed at about 5.45pm! Tony Johnson, carrying an enormous bag containing the "In-flight entertainment" and a large "cool box" - the bar, led his 11 passengers and crew (also laden with bags and boxes) aboard our floating, DIY bar/restuarant/lounge/ promenade. The return voyages from Foxton to Fleckney (through the tunnel) and a short way towards Harborough, were made without major mishap but with cries of "Let's do it again". Maybe, but in August it will be lunch at Mowsley. Tony hopes some members who have not been to one of his lunches will also join the group. Ring him (MH 440501) to reserve your place.

More fun and games. What is the Branch coming to? All this light-hearted frivolity - is this what members of such a respected body as the RBL should be involved in? Well, to judge by the attendance at the July meeting and the relaxed friendly atmosphere during the buffet, games and chat session which followed, it is. To those of you, who in the past, have been put off by long boring meetings, come and try the even longer but entertaining, enjoyable *New and Improved* versions & See the difference!!

Summer

By J R Stimpson

Summer! Ah! Summer! Is here at last
and the vagaries of Spring are now in the past.
The flowers in the gardens are now in full bloom
and the air is scented with their heady perfume.

Those sports that England gave to the world
are now in full swing, club banners unfurled.
Test Matches and Wimbledon bring us to the edge of our seats
watching the stars perform their feats.

On Derby Day the crowds congregate on Epsom Down
to see battle joined for racing's prestigious Crown.

Glorious Goodwood and the Royal Ascot meeting
where her Majesty parades for her loyal greeting.

Regattas at Henley for the scullers to show their prowess
Yachting at Cowes Isle of Wight and the Navy in full dress.

Agricultural Shows and Gymkhanas for the farming fraternity
for the enjoyment of all who live in the country.

The village fetes with cream teas and competitions galore
raising funds for charities always needing more.

Housewives devoting many hours
to making cordial from elderflowers.

These things I love to see
and remember that they all come free:-

The mingling of red poppies with the golden corn
bathed in the warm sunlight of an August morn.
Chestnut blossoms hanging in spirals of red and white
under a canopy of green, such a lovely sight.

The fields of brilliant yellow rape
spreading all over the June landscape
The shimmering beauty of Queen Anne lace bordering a country
lane

A field of buttercups and daisies after a shower of summer rain.
Wild dog-roses decorating the hedgerows in great confusion

The scent of a field of beans growing in profusion
England! This England! There is no other country to which I
would go.

Yes! This I know. This I know.

Our Naval Correspondent, Bill Coston remembers *The Sailor who Refused to go to Sea*

In 1940/41 there was a sailor who flatly refused to go to sea. All efforts to lure him to sail with a ship were in vain. His name was Able Seaman Nuisance a Great Dane (dog type). He would travel between Capetown and Simonstown by train several times a day greeting all sailors on the train. He was not interested in anybody else, just sailors. At night he would "kip" in his own bed in the Sailors Rest in Capetown. The Navy paid for his keep as he had been enlisted in the RN. Anyone who had called at Capetown at this time of the War will remember Nuisance for the great friend and protector of Navy men that he was.

PET FOODS & GARDEN SUPPLIES



J. E. MARTIN
MKT HARBOROUGH
Tel : 01858 462751

We support
The Royal British Legion

The Glorious First of June

by Fred Reed

In the year 1794 our regiment The Worcestershire's received a battle honour on June the first, commemorated each year by parades and sporting events, etc.

Burma 1945, our Battalion the 2nd Worcs was fighting its way up hilly country, being shelled constantly by guns which we could not pin point despite endless patrols to find them. Even with the help of the R.A.F. we were unable to find them.

On reaching a point up the hills, about 15 miles from our objective, which was a place called Kalaw, we rested and were informed that the Gurkhas would be taking over from us. This was great to hear as it was always nice to see Johnny Gurkhas.

The C.O. came back from 'O' groups to inform us that as tomorrow was June the first, we had been awarded the honour of taking Kalaw.

As daybreak came and the heat of the sun became stronger we made our way. Our company, 'B' company, led off up the winding, twisting road towards Kalaw. I got posted to forward scout, anticipating with each step that something was going to happen. On turning a corner, I came across a large hole blown in the road, so I sent the message back and was told to hang on as they would be sending up the Madras Sappers & Miners to repair it.

When they arrived all hell broke loose; there we were caught in an ambush; there were just three of us caught around the corner. We made our way partly down the hill to get some sort of cover, looking for where the firing was coming from, but to no avail, and too much movement by us brought on more fire.

We spent the whole day there. Late afternoon we could hear a rumble of a tank. When the tank arrived the commander told us to make a dash for it and get behind the tank and he would escort us to safety. Unbeknown to us the wireless operator was the other side of the road having taken cover in the hole the Japs had blown. As the wireless operator got up to make a dash, a burst of gun fire caught him and he fell just as the tank twisted to turn around. His feet were caught under the tank tracks and so we dashed to pick him up and go behind the tank, but his feet were completely squashed, an unforgettable sight. Sadly, he died that night. On getting around the corner to safety there was the Brigadier and our C.O. saying, "Good show, we will soon get you a hot meal and drink". (we had not eaten or drunk all day).

We were told to make our way up the hillside and dig in for the night. On getting to our position we were unable to dig in as we had no tools. Then I heard the Sergeant shouting, "Hughes and Reed down the bottom and fetch the food and drink". When we got to the bottom we were met by a lone jeep with a can of water, a large tin of bully and four packets of hard biscuits. So much for a hot meal. We had no

way of opening the bully beef except with our bayonets. That night it was cold, very cold. In the daytime it was very hot but at certain times of the year the nights could be cold and that night it was. As our supplies did not keep up with us we were without blankets. We normally carried them in our big packs but this time they were to be brought up to us but they never arrived.

That was a day I wish to forget - but I cannot. There is every June to remind me.

THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE.

"War Pensions. A Summary from the The Royal British Legion" by the RBL Pensions Department, appeared in *The Pensioner*, a newsletter issued to those who receive a Service Pension. It stresses that anyone who considers that the disability from which they continue to suffer is associated with or due to their service (whether or not in war) in the Armed Forces of the Crown is entitled to claim a DSS war pension. The RBL urges all who may be eligible to make a claim and provides help and advice through local Branch Welfare Officers, and the National LegionLine on 0345 725 725. For more details ring Ken Purdy, (MH440623). Please make this information available to anyone who might benefit.

War Pensioners' Outings are organised by the Leics. W.P. Welfare Committee for deserving cases. The next outing is to Hatton Country World on 11th August. To be considered for a place, ring Ken Purdy who will submit your name.

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

Modern drugs are wonderful.

**They enable a wife with pneumonia
to nurse her husband through 'flu.**

Pam Brown & Faith Hines

Youth at the Menin Gate

by Flt Lt John Standish

The Market Harborough Squadron of the ATC has visited Ypres for the last two years in conjunction with Lutterworth RBL and this article is based on this year's event.

Departing Market Harborough at 0100 hrs on Saturday the party arrived at the hostel at 1000 hrs in persistent rain. A short rest was followed by a last band practice before leaving for Poperinge where the band was to play through the streets as a prelude to its involvement in the Carnival the following day.

After the procession through the town, the band assembled outside the railway station where it took part in a Sunset Ceremony with members of Lutterworth RBL. In the early evening the band and RBL set off for Ypres where they were to play a part in the Last Post Ceremony performed at The Menin Gate. The band led a parade of Royal British Legion members, Leicestershire police and firemen from the Cloth Hall and as they turned off the main square the huge Gate stood before them shining white in the floodlights.

The band marched into the great arch and the notes of RAF March Past reverberated round the stone monument. There followed the short but moving ceremony of the Last Post after which wreaths were laid on behalf of Market Harborough British Legion by Flt Lt Standish, escorted by Flt Lts Liquorish and Smith, and on behalf of the Squadron by FS Standish escorted by Sgts Towers and Quinn.

On the Sunday the party visited one of the many war sites in the area, Hill 62. On this site, held mostly by German Forces during 1st World War, extensive tunnelling and mining operations took place and the hill has been left as it was at the end of the War.

An adjacent museum contained artefacts and pictures of the war and it was hard to imagine that the area now bounded by woods was once a barren landscape and a quagmire of mud where hundreds of men had died.

In the afternoon the band took part in the carnival, more like Notting Hill Carnival than a traditional British small town carnival. The parade takes two hours to pass through the town and every street is packed with spectators. Led by "John Bull" the band was one of 50 groups taking part which also included the "Spice Boys" entry from the The Royal British Legion.

After the procession, Poperinge turns into a riot of confetti, streamers and foam spray as locals in fancy dress costume tour the streets and cafes "entertaining" all and sundry until midnight.

On Monday the party visited Ypres to see in daylight the Menin Gate and the 50,000 names inscribed. It was hard to imagine from looking round the town that it was virtually totally destroyed during World War One and that every building including the impressive Cloth Hall had been rebuilt in the 1920's to original designs. The party also visited the two largest Commonwealth military cemeteries, Tyne Cot containing over 12,000 graves and a wall with 35,000 names inscribed of those with no known grave, and Lisjenhoek with 11,000 graves. Before leaving Market Harborough the cadets had identified 5 graves of local men and relatives of two of the soldiers had been traced. Cadets placed memorial crosses on each grave and trumpeters from the Squadron band played the Last Post

The cadets summed up the weekend:

"I had heard stories from cadets who went last year as to what a great weekend it was but I didn't know what to expect really. I thought the Menin Gate Ceremony was most impressive".

"I have played in the band for some time now but nothing had prepared me for the sight of the Menin Gate and the crowds as we turned into the approach road. The echo of the music under the arch made it sound unreal. Something I will never forget"

"Visiting the two cemeteries and seeing the thousands of white gravestones and the massive walls at Tyne Cot brought home to me the reality of the War and the sacrifices made by others for my generation. Remembrance Day will mean that much more now."

"the carnival and social activities were great. The hospitality of the local people was incredible and even the staff joined in all the fun"

"The memory that sticks with me is the trumpeters playing Last Post at the cemeteries and placing a cross on the grave of a soldier from my home town".

You will gather from the quotes that the serious part of the trip made a deep impression on the cadets.

We have given the relatives copies of photographs taken at the cemeteries and we are hoping that this trip will continue each year with cadets placing crosses each visit. Thank you Market Harborough Branch for your support in providing the wreaths and crosses.

