

For Your Diary

- 18 & 19th Sept. RAFA Wings Appeal**
Street Collection. Please give generously. If you can help, ring Jim Lloyds (MH 463174).
- 20th Sept. Battle of Britain Sunday.**
Market Harborough. Parade assembles at Old Swimming Baths at 10.15am.
Service at Parish Church at 10.45am.
- 20th Sept. Duck Races at Medbourne.**
The Lions Club fun event with cash prizes. From 12 noon at the Neville Arms. Ring Ken Stimpson (MH 545820) for details.
- 26th Sept. RAFA Coffee Morning at the Theatre.**
- 26th Sept. Open Harborough.** The Branch is "Open" at the Settling Rooms 10am to 4pm. Bring your friends for coffee, the displays, Exhibition and to enter a competition.
- 2nd October Anniversary Dinner.** MH Golf Club at 7 for 7.30 pm. See notice on p17.
- 24th October Festival of Remembrance & Black Dyke Mills Band at Derngate Theatre.** Ring Box Office (01604-24811 or 32533)
- 31st October Festival of Remembrance at De Montfort Hall, Leicester.** Individual tickets may still be available. To apply, ring Andrew Marriott (MH 434805)
- 7th November Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall - For details or to book ring Andrew Marriott (MH 434805)**
- 8th November Remembrance Sunday**
Parade and Service. Details later.
- 11th November Pause to Remember.** Two Minutes Silence and Wreath Laying. Details later.
- 11th November Branch A G M**

75th Anniversary Dinner.

2nd October, 1998.

Applications and payment for tickets and requests for help with transport, must reach Tom Jeacock before 25th September.

Call him on MH 466829

Note! Dress is "Optional",
i.e. Dinner Jacket, Lounge Suit or Blazer.
Medals, if miniatures, may be worn.

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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 **14th October**, after the usual short business session, there will be a light buffet and an outline of Branch plans for this year's Poppy Appeal.



Reg. Charity No. 219279

The Royal British Legion
Market Harborough Branch
1923 - 1998



In Touch

Issue 15

September, 1998.

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You may have seen reported in the press the death on 4th September of Michael Hignett, Chairman of neighbouring Clipston Branch. He was the son of the late Lt. Col. Hignett, the much revered former President of our own Branch. A message of condolence has been sent to his widow on behalf of our members.

We have two very different reminders of 1944. It is appropriate to include in this issue reference to Oosterbeek Church and the Battle of Arnhem whose anniversary falls in September. The light hearted tale in verse, of a wartime wedding, also relates to that fateful year but, we believe, to the month of July.

A much more recent September is referred to in Andrew Marriott's Letter to the Editor, written no doubt with tongue in cheek and published with no guarantee of accuracy. Hotspur, however, assures us that his latest story is quite authentic.

We are always pleased to receive contributions to In Touch from non-members and the "Strange Tale" by David Reed, makes intriguing reading. Jack Stimpson, who is a friend of David, adds a postscript which adds to the mystery. In contrast, we include another of Jack's poems of the Seasons, "Autumn".

It is encouraging to see that the News and Diary pages show that the Branch is still actively involved not only with its own affairs but also in the wider community. The more we do with others, the more the Legion gains in respect and support. Let us maintain the momentum.



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Combined Ops. - A War-time Wedding

Personnel from Royal Navy, Army (R.E.M.E.), Royal Air Force*

By Joan Ashmore

We got married.
When?
When leave was stopped to start the new advance
in France.
But Hey!
Hopeful, the bride to be, she asked, she said,
"Could I have just a day or two to wed?"
But no, no pleading would prevail
against the word of jumped-up, chauvanistic male.
"If you had wanted matrimony,
why did you become a WREN
instead of nesting like a qualified,
kitchen-oriented hen?"
But kind C.O. when on his rounds declared
that four days leave (compassion) was allowed.
So plans were made
and family rations were combined
to make the cake.
Despite the bombing raining down each night
that Anderson shelter kept it tight, secure,
until the siren called "All Clear".
However, just before "the day"
down came a bomb
the Church door opened very wide,
so wide, inside was then the same as out,
and booked hotel was scattered all about.
But luckily for us the law
had changed its course a week or two before.
A new decree was passed in haste-
if duty, bombs or other things
made difficult exchange of vows and rings,
then change the place - but not the date,
the War won't stop so don't be late.



We knew we were O.K. in law
with Army C.O.'s signature
to change the place to tie the knot,
this didn't matter - not a jot.
So off to rural Hunts we went
left London lying - bombed and
bent.
But on the chosen wedding day
the curate then had no idea
that one could stop and turn about
the place, the church He had his
doubt.
So off to Huntingdon he sped
on motor bike with tyres red.
Meanwhile, the Minister, he
prayed

while congregation wondered, glanced around,
then whispered soft behind the hand,
"That London girl would be delayed."
Later on the curate came
with paper signed by legal name.
The marriage then, though late, took place,
allowing time to realise with grace
that when the Services unite
they almost get it nearly right,
just like we do when we decide
to be that groom or be that bride.

* Leave granted as follows:-	
Bride (Navy - Senior Service)	4 days compassionate
Groom (Army)	7 days between courses
Bride's Maid (WRAF & table tennis partner of M. O.)	10 days sick leave

Cancelled Visits. The proposed visit to the Poppy Factory was cancelled as Great Glen Branch were unable to get sufficient people to cover the cost of the coach. The same was true of David Hawke's planned trip to Hastings.

Edinburgh Tattoo. There were 15 in our Branch party and we all thought the trip was a great success. The comfortable coach, friendly, helpful driver, good hotel with excellent food, all added to the enjoyment of the Tattoo itself which was spectacular. We were members of a tour advertised and run by Market Harborough & District Travel Club. Even this commercial concern had been unable to fill their coach, nice for us but hardly profitable for them. These cases indicate how difficult it is to sell enough seats to keep ticket prices reasonable

Coffee Mornings. The August event was another success. It was run to raise funds specifically for the Sir Andrew Martin Trust for Young People and so it was particularly pleasing and appropriate to have four young cadets, two each from the ACF and the ATC working with the nine Members who were on duty during the morning. There had been generous donations of money, and items for the Raffle, Cake Stall, Books and Cards Stall and the Tombola. Well over 100 people including a good number of Branch Members called in and most were in generous mood. As a result the Trust benefits by £225, an excellent result for which we have been by the Trustees.

Three coffee mornings are planned for 1999.

Branch Luncheons. *The Staff of Life* at Mowsley was the venue for the August get-together when 15 of us enjoyed good food and companionship in this pleasant village pub. Tony Johnson (MH 440501) would welcome suggestions for where to hold the next lunch. He hopes others will take advantage of this relaxed way of meeting one another.

The Branch and the Community. The Branch is becoming more involved in local affairs. We were invited to attend the District Council Chairman's Civic Service at Lutterworth on Sunday, 23rd August when we were represented by Vice Chairman, Connie Halsall & President, Peter Wilson. Earlier, our views had been sought on the proposed Shopmobility Scheme, and we have been invited to a meeting about a proposed Community bus scheme, and another about the Millenium Celebrations. Plans for our part in Open Harborough have been discussed with the organiser.

Pedal to Paris. No doubt some future issue of *Legion* magazine will report on another success for this fund raising event, but it is unlikely it will mention that soon after they arrived in Paris some of the participants were greeted and congratulated by two M H branch members. It was by pure chance that Joan and Tom Ashmore were sight-seeing when, passing a café, they noticed parked bicycles bearing Legion poppies and beer-drinking young men wearing tee-shirts with Legion logos. By a further coincidence, one of them had been sponsored by someone from Market Harborough! There had been some 300 riders and the event was expected to raise £300,000 in sponsorship, a great achievement.

Enlistment by Hotspur

In March 1939 I reached my 18th birthday. War seemed inevitable, and as I had done some time with the local Cadets, I decided to try to join the city T. A. Regiment, which was affiliated to the glamorous *Queens Own Cameron Highlanders*, kilts and all!

So I reported to the local recruiting office, and after a few questions and answers with the Sergeant I was given a questionnaire to complete. This form was a good foolscap in size, and seemed to reflect in some way the size of my problem of getting into this T. A. Regiment. But I was able eventually to complete all my answers - except one. "Have you any property in Scotland?"

The truthful answer would be, "No", of course. I had no property anywhere, let alone in the Highlands. Would this prejudice my chances? Should I put down a false answer? Was I destined to be a Bevin Boy?

The prospect of marching through the city centre to the railway station, en route to T.A. camp, with fixed bayonets and wearing the kilt, seemed to be fading. After a sleepless night I decided I would offer my honesty against my lack of property and, armed with my application form reported to the CSM at the Drill Hall the following night.



The CSM (he was a tram driver during the day) carefully scrutinised my application form, put it down on the table, looked straight at me for a second or two and asked, "Have you any property in Scotland, boy?". "No Sir", I replied. He looked hard at me again. "Have you got another pair of trousers?". "I have, Sir", I answered, completely perplexed. "Right boy", the CSM pronounced. "You take those trousers, tomorrow morning, for cleaning at *Pullars of Perth* in Castle Street. Now boy, put yes to question 15". I was in!

2nd Bn. Liverpool Scottish, Queens Own
Cameron Highlanders. No. 2930957.

Autumn

Today the leaves began to fall
and I heard the huntsman's distant call.
The morning mist crept stealthily away
like a ghost from the night travelling into day.
The Pampas dance gently in the breeze
displaying their beauty with consummate ease.
The last Rose of Summer still stands to remind
of the beauty to come when Spring is behind.
Chrysanthemums are each showing its lovely head
and so all in the garden is not yet dead,
but of course there are still the Michaelmas Daises
standing proud and erect with their many faces.

Blackberries glisten in the early morning dew
waiting to be garnered by the discerning few.
Hips and haws paint the hedges a glowing red
Nature's bounty for the Winter ahead.
Mushrooms appear as if by chance;
Platforms for the fairies on which to dance.
Swallows dive around making ready to leave
and depart from that nest just under the eave.
The Squirrels are chasing backward and forward
gathering nuts for their winter hoard,
but where will the rest of the wildlife go?
I do not know! I do not know!

J. R. Stimpson

20th October, 1997.

Letter to the Editor

From
BRANCH SECRETARY: Mr. A W Marriott

Dear Sir,

LOST TRAILS.

I first met 24726KFS Apprentice Tradesman, OI YEW on the train, to the Army Apprentice College, Chepstow. It was Tuesday 17th September 1985. We boarded at Birmingham New street and talked about our new adventure. At the tender age of 16½ we were excited about serving our Country, learning a new trade and leaving home. We had yet to experience the feeling of impending doom as drill Sergeants and Sergeant Majors shouted at us, although as had been proved at the medical, our hearing was in excellent condition.

Once at the camp we parted to our respective Companies. It was six or more months later when we met again, in the NAAFI, and we talked of our recent activities. It was then that he told me his family had served in all four Services. I say four Services as we include the Merchant Navy. His family has served in the Army and Navy for hundreds of years, going back to Waterloo, but the Air Force was a bit new to the family. As we walked back from the NAAFI an RP Corporal screamed "Oi yew, stand still!" What had we done wrong? I was just about to ask Oi but he'd vanished, so I got the wrath of the Corporal for having my hands in my pockets and a show parade the following night in works dress.

The next time we met was at Bessbrooke Mill in South Armagh on the landing pad, we were both waiting for a helicopter. Oi was off to do some

plumbing. I was returning to my troop after summer leave. It was a lovely summer's day, so we decided to do a spot of sunbathing.

Suddenly the peace was broken, not by the IRA, but a Sergeant Major bellowing, "Oi Yew"! By the time I was on my feet, shirt on, beret on, Oi had cleared off. I stood alone with this Sergeant Major's face nose to nose with mine. After lots of "yew 'orrible little man and as a Lance Corporal yew should know better", I was awarded 2 extra duties.



The third and final time we met was in Berlin, for the Queens Birthday Parade. It was then that I found out, a lot about his family, mainly the females.

That was 5-6 years ago. Do any of your readers know him, or perhaps served with a member of his family? I would like to hear any stories they may have.

Yours Sincerely

Andy Marriott.

Mr B

His & Hers

Hair Fashions

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APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

The Church near "a Bridge too far"

Earlier this year, John Dilks visited Oosterbeek and brought back a booklet produced for the visitors to the Church sub-titled "An impression of the September days of 1944". John has since been in correspondence with Mr Kardol, Secretary to the Council of Church Wardens, who has kindly agreed to allow us to reproduce extracts which would be of interest to our members. He also sent John a Programme of the 54th Commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem taking place from 17th to 20th September, and pictures including one of the damaged Church taken in Spring 1945.

The Battle of Arnhem evokes different reactions in different people. It has been the subject of many books written with varying degrees of impartiality but the little publication has a simple authenticity which makes fascinating reading. A few passages illustrate this.

On Sunday, September 17th 1944, a few miles to the west of Oosterbeek, thousands of gliderborne troops with the heavier equipment are flown in by hundreds of gliders, and thousands of paratroopers are dropped.The civilians are watching the landings and they can hardly believe that the hour of their liberation has struck.....The ring of violence is closing in on the area around the Old Church. Mr & Mrs Ter Horst live in what used to be the Vicarage, next to the church, and in their house a Regimental Aid Post is established.....there is only one military doctor...some orderlies and Mrs Ter Horst and her young children.....

A special leaflet with further, more extensive extracts will be available to members, later. Ring the Editor if you wish to have a copy.

A Strange Tale

By David J Reed

My son Ian is now 32 years old and this occurrence happened for the first time when he was about seven or eight. He was in his bedroom early one November evening playing on the floor with his train set. My daughter Caroline who was about eighteen at the time was sitting at her dressing table in her bedroom. Both bedrooms doors were standing open.

Ian looked up from his train set to see a man standing on the step into his bedroom looking at him. Ian was startled but at that point was not actually frightened, thinking that one of the family was with him. The man smiled, turned on the step and walked out of the door. Ian ran through to Caroline's room saying, "Did you see that man?" Caroline laughed and said, "Of course I did. It was Dad". Ian said, "No it wasn't. Dad's up the garden sawing wood."

Both children came running downstairs to their mother who was in the kitchen. Janet called me from outside and I came in and searched the house but of course nobody was there. After a while things got back to normal.

It was about a month later that I asked Ian what the man was wearing. He said it was an old fashioned uniform of a soldier with two rows of buttons on his tunic. This caused my wife and I to sit up and take notice.

At this point another tale starts.

In April 1840 a Captain De Vere Caldwell was staying in Little Bowden with his relative a Mrs. Hannah Brown who we know lived in this house because her name is on the old deeds. The

Captain had ridden out to Brixworth to visit friends and on the way had stopped off at Lamport Hall to attend a party. Having had a little too much to drink he climbed up one of



the stone gate pillars on each of which sits a swan made of cast iron. The swan broke off and the captain fell, the beak going through his chest. He was put in a carriage and brought to Little Bowden

where the nearest doctor lived. He died during the night. His grave is in Little Bowden Churchyard.

Ian has "seen" the "Captain" on about three occasions over the years and has recently become quite interested in him. He rang Army Records in London to ask for any information on him and was told that he died in Ceylon and was buried there in a military cemetery. My son told them he was in Little Bowden Churchyard. After a minute or two of "Oh, No he isn't", "Oh, Yes he is", the conversation ended in stalemate.

The question is why is he not buried at the family home which is in Norfolk and why have the Army got it wrong?

Our house is very old and appears on a map dated 1698, the oldest we can find.

David Reed wrote this story for *In Touch* at the request of his friend, our Tur Langton member, Jack Stimpson who adds the following Postscript.

Ian was watching TV one night (he was then a teenager) and David and Janet went to bed. Some time later David awoke and saw the

downstairs light was still on so got up and went downstairs. He found Ian in the kitchen sitting on a chair to watch TV with a small Jack Russell terrier on his lap. He looked very frightened and David said "What's wrong?". Ian said he had gone upstairs to bed and found the same man standing in the same spot at which point he fled downstairs and switched on all the lights and that is as David found him.

Over the years David and Janet have had three dogs none of which would go upstairs without someone being with them and in front going up and behind them coming down.

The tombstone in Little Bowden Churchyard carries the inscription, "Captain De Vere Caldwell, Regiment of Light Infantry, died 8th April, 1840".

The Northampton Mercury of 18th April, 1840, reported "Captain Caldwell, a nephew of Sir Justinian Isham, expired at the residence of Mr. Brown of Little Bowden, on Wednesday week.Captain Caldwell obtained his commission only in February last"

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