



"SANDBAG"

WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER Volume 8 Issue 3



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NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

Next branch meeting 16th May 7 p.m.

April
2011



Alan Mann

Alan Mann passed away on 22nd March after a long illness. Alan will be sadly missed for all his charm and wit and for being a thoroughly nice person to know. Alan was three times mayor of Wincanton and was involved in many aspects of town life. Although he was in a reserved occupation in 1945 Alan volunteered for the Parachute Regiment and was entitled to wear the coveted Red Beret. After service in the army he went on to a distinguished career in engineering eventually becoming chief engineer to what was then Unigate in Wincanton. Rest in Peace Alan.

Visit to Thorney Island 19th May

As we go to print it looks like the coach to Thorney Island Royal Artillery Base on 19th May is completely full, if you wish to go and have not put your name on the list I will take names on a waiting list in the event of cancellations. Because it will take about 2 hours to get there we must leave the Memorial Hall promptly at 8.30 a.m. and we should get home about 6 p.m., we will make a stop both ways. Cost is as usual £10 and we must pay £5 for the lunch in the Mess which will include wine.

Lunch at the new Otter Garden Centre 6th April

Well over 40 of us attended the branch lunch at the new Otter Garden Centre on 6th April and all agreed it was not only an excellent meal but a very good venue. I was fortunate to have been invited to the opening of the centre last month and met their owner. She tells me that she is a staunch supporter of the Legion and would be very happy to give us a "behind the scenes tour" at their main nursery at Ottery St. Mary. On discussing this further I find that she could possibly do this during the time they are preparing for the Christmas items and they have a "Poinsettia Trail" which by all accounts is very nice. It would also give us a chance to see the Christmas market and get those difficult present too! We could also incorporate our pre-Christmas lunch there and perhaps go on to Exmouth (we went to Sidmouth last time we were at Ottery St. Mary). Once I have more details I will let you know the date - we do not want to be too near Christmas as it gets very busy there.

Just part of our group at the lunch



Visit to Hall & Woodhouse Brewery Blandford 26th March

Although there were not enough of us to make a coach trip viable we did have a moderate size group who went by cars to Hall & Woodhouse Brewery in Blandford on 26th March and it turned out to be a very enjoyable day out. Having an excellent tour guide and all of us staying for lunch at the brewery a good time was had by all. We were very fortunate to have decided to make the tour this year as the old traditional brewery is being closed next year, making way for a new modern building which is in the process of being built—whilst it would have been interesting to make the trip in future we were able to see the old traditional methods and the historic charm of the original building.



Part of our group - having been "kitted out!"

It was in 1777 when Charles Hall founded the brewery during the time of the threat of invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte. Hearing that the army encamped at Weymouth were not only getting very bored awaiting the French but were in need of water and supplies etc., Charles Hall approached the government and was awarded the contract to supply the army with beer. In those days clean water was always difficult to supply and many people drank beer instead! Charles Hall developed the business over the years and in the mid 1800s employed a young Edward Woodhouse into the business. Charles liked Edward and admired his acquired brewing skills, being very pleased when Edward became engaged to his daughter. Over the years the Woodhouse family married into the Hall family and having more boys than girls finally became a total Woodhouse family brewery but retained the original name.



Copper house

Beer has four essential ingredients :- *Liquor*, which is the brewing term for water, the Blandford brewery water comes from bore holes sunk 40 meters into the ground and because it is filtered through chalk it is ideal for brewing traditional ales. *Hops*, this gives the beer the bitterness, flavours and pleasant aromas.

Malt, malted barley provides the fermentable sugars and other nutrients that add to the flavour of the finished beer. *Yeast*, ferments the sugar (wort) turning them into beer by producing alcohol and carbon dioxide. The sweet wort is boiled in large copper containers known as a "copper house" for one hour. This is carried out to sterilise the wort and reduce the grainy character of the beer by boiling off the more volatile components. The boiled wort is then

pumped into fermentation vessels and yeast is added which converts the sugar into alcohol, this process lasts four days and allows the flavours to develop. Ground malt is added to the liquor and filtered producing a sugary substance which is sold off as cattle feed.

I think the most enduring memory we have of the brewery was the amazing smell of the hot barley and malt. Once the brewing process is complete the finished beer goes into the bottling and canning process machines. These are dual purpose (cans and bottles) capable of filling 18,000 bottles or 57,000 cans per hour, an amazing machine!

All of us agreed what a good day out it was.



Fermentation vessels

Our “Local Regiment”

I know many of us look back with great affection and regard when remembering the old English County Regiments. We are indeed proud of the history and achievements of the Somerset Light Infantry, The Dorset Regiment and the Wiltshire Regiment. With continual reorganisation of the Army over the years we have seen many changes. When I served in the Territorial Army the TA battalion of the Duke of Edinburgh Royal Regiment was the Wessex Regiment. The “Duke’s” as it was known amalgamated with the Gloucestershire Regiment and then became Royal Regiment of Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire and the Wessex Regiment became its TA battalion. The Dorset Regiment became the Devon & Dorset Regiment and the Somerset Light Infantry became the Somerset & Cornwall Light Infantry and in 1968 all the Light Infantry regiments became “The Light Infantry”.



In 2007 a new regiment was formed from The Devon & Dorset Light Infantry, The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire & Wiltshire Light Infantry, The Light Infantry and The Royal Green Jackets. This of course is The Rifles and in its short history has already given us a sense of pride in our army and has established itself in the best traditions of bravery and excellence worthy of the British Army. It is also our “local regiment”, in fact, 6th Battalion The Rifles (6 Rifles) comprising 520 all ranks, are one of The Rifles two TA infantry battalions. Their bases are spread throughout the Southwest of England, and for those who live in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset or Gloucestershire, they are in fact their local Country Regiment! 6 Rifles are a light role battalion and have four rifle companies, a headquarters company, each comprising approximately 100 soldiers, plus the accomplished Salamanca Band & Bugles who cover ceremonial engagements.

We have two regular battalions not far away, 4 Rifles are based at Bulford Camp and are a Mechanised Infantry regiment equipped with the new tracked Armoured Vehicle - Bulldog. Bulldog with its protection and mobility provides a unique capability to reinforce peace support operations around the globe. The battalion's situation means it is well situated for the traditional Rifles areas in London and the South. 1 Rifles are based at Chepstow and are a Light Role Infantry Battalion within 3 Commando Brigade, a unique role within the infantry. 1 Rifles has recently had detachments in both in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We hear lots of mention of The Rifles, which is in fact now the largest infantry regiment in the British Army, it consists of five regular and two territorial battalions, plus a number of subunits in other TA battalions. The remaining battalions are spread around the country and Germany - 2nd Battalion is in Northern Ireland, 3rd Battalion in Edinburgh, 5th Battalion Paderborn, Germany and the 7th (TA) Battalion is based in Reading. It is pleasing to know that this excellent regiment is continuing local links.



June trip is to Bournemouth 18th June

We are all familiar with the delights of Bournemouth in the summer so I have arranged the June trip to be to Bournemouth on 18th June. Cost as always is £10 each. I would appreciate your names as soon as possible if you wish to go. Depart Memorial Hall at 9 a.m. and return home around 6 p.m.

Festival of Remembrance Colston Hall Bristol 5th November 2011

After discussion at the last branch meeting members expressed a desire to go the Festival of Remembrance at the Colston Hall, Bristol as opposed to going to the Albert Hall London again. The date for this is 5th November and we will incorporate an afternoon in Bristol as well. When more is known I will firm this up, nearer the time. As I mentioned at the meeting we can still obtain 4 tickets to the evening performance at the Albert Hall from County and these will be available in July. It is also possible to go independently to the afternoon performance at the Albert Hall and if you are interested please contact me.

Poppy Party 11th June

Arrangements are now finalised for the Poppy Party on 11th June. The party will start at 7.30 p.m., John Gudge will sing us country music and in the interval we will provide a fish & chips supper. As it is a members only event we will make available wine, beer and soft drinks for a very moderate donation. Cost is £5 and tickets are available from me from now on. Please get your tickets as we are only selling 60 on a first come basis. The second Poppy Party in August will be a larger event open to the public. Profits will help boost our 2010 Poppy Appeal.
Tony

Two important meeting date changes

I will remind everyone again during the coming months but there has been a need to change the date of the AGM to Monday 7th November and to change the date of the July meeting to 11th July. This has been brought about by key committee members being unavailable on the original dates.

Welcome new members Violet Welch and Peter Berry who joined us this month.



Coffee Morning 2nd April

We had another very successful Coffee Morning on 2nd April and we raised £172.32 for branch funds (Raffle £110 & tea/coffee donations £62.32) The above photo was taken by Phil & Yvonne Rogers's friend Karlheinz Bindemann who was visiting them from our twin town of Lahnau Germany. It was very nice to welcome Karlheinz to our gathering and good to see from the photo that he has a sense of humour. It looks like the "buggy park" was getting quite full !

Advance notice of local events

27th May , The Rifles will receive the Freedom of Blandford Forum, ceremony will take place outside the Council Offices at 11 a.m.

6th June, Dorchester D-Day celebrations outside Keep Museum 10.30 a.m.

19th June, Veterans Parade at Weymouth. Car Park at Lodmoor and bus service to the Esplanade for veterans from 9 a.m. until 10.20 a.m. Assembly 10 - 10.30 a.m., March off 10.45 a.m. Return shuttle bus is available.

Old Faithful Day 25th June

The plaque is being made and aircraft propeller will be forming part of the new memorial at Snag Farm. Don't forget to register for an invitation to the ceremony at the farm at 3 p.m. on Saturday 25th June. I will be writing a commemorative feature for Sandbag next month.