

Quantock RBL Newsletter Summer 2011

Bicknoller, Crowcombe, Monksilver, Nettlecombe, Stogumber,
West Quantoxhead, West Bagborough & Districts

Hello everyone. This is a bigger than usual newsletter but we wanted to share things and inform about our efforts to raise money for our cause. Membership is at 145 and there will be an increase in subs of £1 to £13 this year. The increase was contested at the national conference but unfortunately we've had to bow to increased costs.

In April, 30 or so members and guests enjoyed a fish and chip supper at the Bicknoller Inn where we raised £50. Our May 7th coffee morning at Coombe Cottage (courtesy of Deirdre Gascoigne) went well (considering the weather) and we raised £460. A huge thank you to all who helped and supported us, especially to Graham High, Glan Rowbottom and Edward Down, the fishermen. We enjoyed our trout last weekend.

Also included in this issue is an update on Dunkirk Memorial House by Graham High, MBE, where he has been Chairman for some ten years, in addition to his volunteer work at Branch and Poppy Collection level plus an e-mail from James Greswell in Afghanistan. We recently welcomed James' father Charles onto our committee whose help is much needed.

Over the weekend 24/26th June we are holding a sale of paintings by John Moulton. At 89 he moved to Dunkirk Memorial House where he took up painting and painted nearly 200 works until he died at the age of 94. His family have donated over 70 paintings and prints to **The Royal British Legion** (John was a member for many years, having served as Major in WWII) **and Macmillan Cancer Support** (John was Treasurer of the Coleridge Committee for 12 years). All proceeds will be divided between the two charities.

Entrance Free, refreshments available, Bicknoller Village Hall

Friday 24 June 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Saturday 25 10.00am to 6.00pm

and Sunday 26 June 10.00am to 4.00pm



Dunkirk Memorial House (DMH) was officially opened in 1995. It accommodates 56 residents, all of whom are ex-service men and women or their immediate dependents. The matron manager is responsible to the Royal British Legion Head of Homes for the running of the home.

There is a house committee who are not concerned with any aspect of management. They are volunteers from or outside the Legion.

The Chairman is appointed by National Council, and he/she in turn appoints the members of the Committee. They tend to be people with special experience or expertise relevant to DMH. Their main responsibility is to oversee and operate the Amenity Fund which finances from donations a very wide range of services and activities to augment the care provided for residents. It also has a major role in fund-raising and generally helping Matron with any activity to promote and publicise the work of the home.

DMH has been given top awards by all national and local inspectors. It employs about 80 staff. We all think that it is a credit to the Royal British Legion.

There is a constant campaign to raise money for the Amenity Fund. We need about £30,000 per annum to pay for all the “extras”. These include basic things like a mini-bus, physiotherapy, outings and parties, Christmas celebrations and entertainment computer and TV equipment, furniture and furnishings, special garden features and many other smaller items.

RBL branches in the West Country are targeted for donations – one branch gave £10,000 last year to buy a summerhouse. Branches are invited and encouraged to visit us for the day. For most such a visit is an eye opener. Currently we are producing a DVD about DMH which will be distributed as widely as possible. Branch members regularly volunteer their time to activities there. If you would like to get involved, please call Graham on 01984 656416 or DMH direct on 01823 432 407.



On July 3rd we are holding a Summer Fair in our beautiful grounds (10 – 4pm). Do come along and bring some friends. It will be a really good day out.

Message from Afghanistan by James Greswell

"I have been in Nad-e Ali in Helmand Province of Afghanistan for almost three months with 45 Commando, Royal Marines. Our Forward Operating Base (FOB) is built around the ruins of a fort built by the British Army in 1878 during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. Locals still believe that there is hidden treasure buried underneath the castle that we have come back to recover or to "gain revenge for our grandfathers". Nad-e Ali is the breadbasket of Helmand province due to the hundreds of kilometres of canals built by American engineers in the 1950s which allow farmers to cultivate fertile fields out of what would otherwise be desert. When we arrived in March the opium poppy harvest was just beginning, which then gave way to the wheat harvest and the fields are now beginning to fill with maize.

My Troop forms 45 Commando's Protected Mobility Group equipped with the Mastiff armoured vehicle, designed to protect against improvised explosive devices (IEDS) which pose the greatest threat to British Forces in Afghanistan. A normal day begins at about 6.30am patrolling between the smaller patrol bases (PBs) and check points dotted around Nad-e Ali until sun down at about 7.30pm. It has got increasingly hot since we have been here and is now normally between 40 and 45°C which is made more uncomfortable by the body armour, helmet and amount of kit we carry.

Security is generally good throughout the district except on the boundaries with other districts. Most of the locals seem pleased to see us or at worse indifferent and are generally keen to talk at any opportunity. The children can be a nuisance always demanding sweets, biscuits and pens and have a habit of throwing stones at the vehicles, mostly out of boredom rather than any malicious intent.

There isn't a great deal to do in any down time except go the makeshift gym which is two tents providing a mix of proper gym equipment and improvised weights made out of anything heavy lying around. The food is remarkably good although we are normally out on the ground before breakfast and miss lunch so eat the long-life rations which are also not too bad though they lack variety. However dinner is always a highlight of the day. Visits to the Ghurkha PBs are always welcome due to their fondness of buying goats from the locals which they make great ceremony out of beheading with one chop of their kukris to make Nepalese curries.

Hopefully the second half of the tour will go as smoothly as the first and we can all look forward to how we are going to spend our Post-Operational Tour Leave!"



Henry Stone, Standard Bearer

Lastly, we have some very sad news. Our Standard Bearer Henry Stone died very suddenly in May, just a week after we saw him at our coffee morning and our fish and chip evening just a couple of weeks before that. He also carried the Standard for Williton Branch. Shown below with Crowcombe and Stogumber retired Standard Bearer Hector Potter. We shall miss him very much.



Georgina Miles in Antarctica

The Royal British Legion is 90 years old this year and to celebrate the local RBL Quantock Branch is holding a fund-raiser. Georgina Miles, formerly of Bicknoller, Somerset, led an expedition in Antarctica with a British Antarctic Survey team to drill ice cores. Georgina attended St Peter's and Danesfield in Williton and West Somerset College, Minehead and completed her sixth form at Taunton School before going to Reading University where she graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in physics and meteorology.



She is currently based close to Oxford where she works in research at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory involving monitoring the ozone layer with the European Space Agency. In addition, her work on her PhD with Oxford University on the effects of volcanic eruption emissions on our atmosphere is just coming to its conclusion.

July 8th is a unique opportunity to hear about Georgina's adventures when she led her team in Antarctica, one of the most extreme parts of the world, with some stunning photography. Money raised is to go towards the Personal Recovery Centres, a project jointly funded by the Legion, Help for Heroes and the Government. The aim being to ensure that all service personnel who have been affected by action get the help if they need it. The evening starts at 6.30 for 7pm with a licenced bar and delicious canapés.

Bicknoller village hall 6.30 pm 8th July 2011

Tickets Adult £6.00 Children under 14 £4.00

To book tickets call Pam Miles on 01984 632 742 or visit:

www.Quantockrbl.org

e-mail at: tickets@quantockrbl.org

Please note that we have altered the date of our Barbeque in the Marquee to 6.30pm Friday, August 5th, not the Saturday as previously published.

We hope this does not cause any inconvenience and that you can make it on the night.

Do try and join us on our fundraising events this year. Your support is very important, and on behalf of your committee, we look forward to seeing you. On behalf of those who benefit from all our efforts, thank you.

Dates for your Diary:

Friday, 8th July 6.30 for 7pm Bicknoller Village Hall.

Expedition to Antarctica by Georgina Miles

Tickets Adult £6.00 Children under 14 £2.00 to include canapés

Licensed bar.

Advance booking recommended, cheques made out to Quantock RBL

Please contact:

Pam Miles 01984 632 742 or David Thorpe 01984 656 402.

Friday, 5th August.

Quantock RBL Barbeque,

6.30pm Marquee, Bicknoller Village Hall

£8 adults, £4 under 12yrs

Advance booking recommended, cheques made out to Quantock RBL

to go to Gladys 01984 656 452 or David Thorpe 01984 656 402.

13th November Remembrance Sunday.

10.50am St George's Church, Bicknoller

Followed by a buffet lunch at the Bicknoller Inn.

Please let Gladys know if you would like to attend 01984 656 452 .

Pay on the day. More details later.

Wednesday, 23rd November

Quantock Royal British Legion AGM,

11am Bicknoller Village Hall followed by lunch (optional)

Please let Gladys know if you would like to attend 01984 656 452.

Pay on the day. More details later.

Monday 5 December - Skittles and fish & Chips

6.30pm (please note early time) Bicknoller Inn

Please let Gladys know if you would like to attend 01984 656 452.

Pay on the day. More details later.

Tickets to events can also be organised through our website
<http://quantockrbl.org/events>

Some memories.....



Member Carole Thorpe and helper Cerys Randell relaxing after serving a lovely lunch at our AGM last year.



Another helper Peggy Chandler, who also knitted hats along with Jan Barraclough, Rose Fish, Rita Thrush, Meg Pack, Christine Waters, Anne Leigh's Mum and Gladys Fillary.



Poppy Bear (11")

Specially commissioned by the Somerset County
Will be available for sale at £5 at our events

Currently we are helping a member to have a stair lift installed.

If anyone knows of a serving or ex-service member of the armed services and or immediate family who may need help please contact our welfare officer, Sally Horn on 01643 821 546 – all in confidence.

DO YOU HAVE AN E-MAIL ADDRESS?

If you do please e-mail us though the web-site and tell us if you would like to have your newsletter sent to you this way, making the usual savings

