

Issue No 7- July 2008

# Legion Rider

Newsletter of The Royal British Legion Riders Branch



Visit the website at - [www.rblr.co.uk](http://www.rblr.co.uk) - join the riders online forum



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# Admin & A brief Branch History - June 08

## President

Mr John Hawthornthwaite

## Chairman

Paul Pollard  
chairman@rbl.co.uk

## Vice Chairman

Graham Barber  
vice-chairman@rbl.co.uk

## Secretary

Pete Bradley  
secretary@rbl.co.uk

## Treasurer

Anna Simmons  
treasurer@rbl.co.uk

## Welfare Officer

Lynnette Francis  
01284 725833  
welfare@rbl.co.uk

## PR

Dave Bowen/Tony Carr  
pr@rbl.co.uk

## Sponsorship Coordinator

Tony Lewis  
sponsorship@rbl.co.uk

## National Events

Bob Anderson  
Events@rbl.co.uk

## National Recruiting

Mike Baxter  
mike@rbl.co.uk

## National District Rep

Tony Dadson  
recruiting@rbl.co.uk

## Newsletter/Web

Pete Bradley  
webmaster@rbl.co.uk

## Membership

Martyn White  
07866 481843  
Membership@rbl.co.uk

## Merchandising

Lev Leverett/Chris Smith  
merchandising@rbl.co.uk

## QM

Alex Poole  
alex@rbl.co.uk

## Public Events Advisor

Rick Laing  
richard-laing@rbl.co.uk

## Regional Reps

### North:

Paul (Paddy) McCreanor  
07915 387323  
north@rbl.co.uk

### Midlands:

Andy (Ivor) Downer  
07786 920714  
midlands@rbl.co.uk

### East & Overseas:

Karl Harvey  
07841 498112  
east.overseas@rbl.co.uk

### Wales & Ireland:

Ian McLauchlan  
07739 805305  
wales.ireland@rbl.co.uk

### South & Forum:

JJ Jarvis  
07771 738752  
south@rbl.co.uk

## Postal Address

The Royal British Legion  
Riders Branch (BR 3542)  
20 Higher Wood, Bovington,  
Wareham, Dorset, BH20 6NF

## Contact Number

07866 481843

## RBL Contact Details

Legionline 08457 725725  
(call charged at local rates)

[www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

Disablement Pension Claims  
020 7973 7236

Compensation Claims  
020 7973 7236

Disability Section  
020 7973 7249

Careers Advice  
0800 1694073 (Freephone)

In July 2004 a meeting took place at The Royal British Legion Village to discuss the possibility of an ex-services motorcycle club becoming an official branch of the RBL to promote its good causes within the motorcycle fraternity.

Circumstances took over and this idea was discarded but not forgotten. In late August, Paul Pollard and Graham Barber decided to resurrect the idea and approached some of those who were at the first meeting to forward the idea.

The Legion was contacted again with a clear way ahead and an informal meeting was set up in November at RBL Cheltenham where the 14 original members met to discuss how to proceed and to form a committee, 12 volunteered for the first Riders Committee and are still the bulk of the committee as it stands today. It was at this meeting that we formally decided on our name and an adapted set of Branch Byelaws. At the end of this informal meeting, the official inaugural meeting took place and "The Riders" were officially formed.

2005 saw our first official events – an invite to ride into the annual conference at Torquay and be introduced to all the delegates, Beaulieu Motorcycle World and of course our annual Poppy Run, where 11 Riders travelled to Germany visiting Paderborn, Sennelager, Herford and Celle on the fund raising campaign raising £2150 for the Poppy Appeal.

November 2005 saw our first AGM at RBL Cheltenham with the Branch having grown to 160 Riders.

2006 saw us out and about again with more events, more rallies, whilst the Poppy Run took 23 Riders to France and Belgium visiting Commonwealth Grave sites and laying a wreath at the poignant Menin Gate ceremony in Ypres, raising £6000.

The 2006 AGM was held at the world renowned ACE Café in London with the Riders joining in their service of Remembrance on the Sunday with our brand new standard on display for the first time and having recruited a further 204 members.

2007 was been a phenomenal recruiting year with 335 new members to September. More events, more shows, the first use of the MDU and participation in Legion in the Community, where we show our support to local Legion Branches by turning up en-masse to help support their efforts.

The 2007 Poppy Run saw some 20+ Riders travelling around the UK, along the west coast and returning south via the east coast and visiting Edinburgh Castle for a wreath laying ceremony, ending in classic style at the ACE Café.

2008 kicked off with a phenomenal interest in the branch and in May, our 1000th member joined, a serving British Soldier. Our Poppy Appeal cheque of £10,000 was received by Hayley Westenra, on behalf of the RBL at Pall Mall in April and we repaid her in style, by escorting her on a trike with 20 Outriders to The Brits Classical Awards Show 2008. The branch carried out its Annual Memorial Run in May to The National Arboretum. Riders were on the television with the Hairy Bikers and the 2nd National Rally held at Ratcliffe College were all a phenomenal success.

The Riders Branch is open to anyone who has an interest in motorcycles and we welcome all new members who wish to support the Legions work our way. The Branch now stands at 1132 and is growing all the time.

Our aims are the same today as it was then, "to raise awareness of the RBL and how it can help those serving/ex-serving who are in need of help, to raise money for the Poppy Appeal and to have fun," and as we have since discovered these last two ideals are mutually compatible.

# Welfare & Forum

## Welfare

Following a survey in 2005 of 6,000 people of varying ages in the UK, the Legion identified some changing needs in our ageing ex-service population, and has responded by introducing some new services with more on the way.

The first one was the introduction of **Poppy Calls** – a handy man (employed by the Legion) to carry out minor repairs which will assist the elderly and disabled to maintain their independence in their own homes. The survey mentioned above identified that of the 2.1 million veterans aged 75 and over, 18% said they were experiencing difficulty in maintaining their homes. The Legion is seen as a trusted provider of caring services to people who need assistance, which is an important factor in this day and age when vulnerable people cannot be too careful of whom they invite into their homes. The aim is to have approx. 48 Poppy Calls Vans up and running throughout the country by 2010. There are currently six on the road with a further 12 planned by the end of this year. Examples of minor repairs include:

- Fixing curtain rails
- Tacking down carpets
- Putting up shelves
- Changing light bulbs
- Changing tap washers
- Installing security devices such as locks, door chains & spy holes
- Small repairs
- Moving furniture
- Turning Mattresses
- Minor aids and adaptations in conjunction with Occupational Therapists.

This service is available to all those who would normally qualify for RBL assistance under the Royal Charter.

The next service is **Benefits and Money Advice**. As we are all aware there are a lot of people who are in debt and are reliant upon benefits to survive. So this service is being developed in partnership with the RAFBF and Citizens Advice Bureau. Trained staff are based in the Citizens Advice Bureau premises and only deal with serving and ex-service personnel.

These staff are able to perform Benefit Health Checks to ensure that the client is in receipt of all the benefits that they are entitled to as well as provide advice on how to deal with debt. These trained staff will contact creditors to negotiate reduced repayments, or get certain debts written off as well as assist the client to make themselves bankrupt. In counties where this service is not yet available, there are dedicated staff at Pall Mall who provide this type of advice. Anyone needing Benefits or Debt advice should contact their local County Office.

Another service is **Civvystreet** although this has been in existence for sometime; a new web site was recently launched specifically for serving and ex-service personnel who are seeking re-training and training grants. Once registered on the site,

Civvystreet identify the client's circumstances and needs and provide appropriate services from their member organisations. Those people registered on this site have access to specialised e-learning packages and can put organisations and individuals in touch with a wide range of funding opportunities for learning and development. If you are looking for a re-training opportunity log onto [civvystreet.org.uk](http://civvystreet.org.uk)



Further services to be launched are; the Health and Wellbeing Activities, as this is not a service that the TRBL is set up to deliver, it will be done in collaboration with other Agencies. Another one is called Time Banks.

Time Banking is a new concept for providing people with a community mechanism under which they can have the opportunity of helping other people and receive help and support themselves in return. I will provide further information as these services are developed.



Please direct any enquiries to me via [welfare@rbl.co.uk](mailto:welfare@rbl.co.uk).

Until next time.....

*Lynnette Francis*

Riders Branch Welfare Secretary

## The Forum

This year like the Branch the Forum has gone from strength to strength, nearly trebling the number of users from just over 220 to 648.

We now have a wide variety of subject headings and active members who are not afraid to start a thread/topic and carry it on to a not always obvious conclusion.

This year has also seen the inclusion of an excellent welfare section, with direct access to the Branch Welfare Officer. A facility which, has been used effectively on several occasions.

There have been a few instances of big brother watching but on the whole, all members have used the forum as it was intended, with a cracking mix of humour, sarcasm and more subject matter experts than a party conference.

If any members would like to see additional topics/sections added just drop me an email and I will do what I can.

Just to end on a repetitive note, if anyone would like their email address changed please forward it to myself and I will make the changes, this will prevent anyone being blocked from the site and please DO NOT click on any new members website.

<http://rbl.co.uk/forums/index.php>

*JJ*

Forum Administrator

# Various Photos from out and about!



# Photos from Articles

Easter in Ypres



Alex's Tool Kit



## Easter in Ypres

### Wednesday (19/03/2008)

Our Easter jaunt to Ypres nearly did not happen. The noble steed was sick, spewing oil all over the garage floor, Alex was off to Germany with work; would she make the journey in such a sorry state? Fortunately an internet search and a recommendation from UK GSER; we located a Knight in shining armour "Mike from Cardiff Motorad" worked through the night to restore to full working order.

### Thursday (20/03/2008)

Alex arrives from Germany in the early hours of the morning. We quickly dash in to Cardiff to retrieve noble steed. Bags are packed last minute rendezvous details confirmed with Pete and Anna from Bovington and off to bed early for the early start on Friday.

### Friday (21/03/2008)

The morning was grey and gloomy; rain was forecast. Alex Poole and trusty side kick (Sarah) mount the noble steed, with difficulty as dressed like Eskimos in thermals, leather and water proofs. We head off to the Channel Tunnel, the adventure has begun.

A pleasant breakfast was had at a local biker's café off the M20. The suitably refreshed travellers remounted and continue to Folkestone.

Disaster strikes as we approach the junction for the tunnel. Lorries and cars are queuing from the exit onwards.

Finally, with patience and perseverance we reach the terminal two hours early. Good news the lady gives us an earlier boarding pass. Whilst supping a frothy coffee a message goes out, "There has been a breakdown in the tunnel there will be a short delay in service."

One hour and several frothy coffees later we are asked to board our train. Great, we will still arrive an hour early. Once on board we get a call from Pete and Anna they are having similar problems at Calais. Will nothing go right today!

Disaster looms once more as a very pleasant young man announces that due to a delay removing the train from the tunnel there will be a further wait.

The time is passed chatting to a fellow biker on a sweet looking Moto Guzzi. There is free water passed round, but the toilet keeps breaking. The travellers are performing an excellent version of the potty dance; most entertaining.

Finally on our way we reach Calais to find the wet and windy weather.

We arrive greeted at the Rum Jar Bed and Breakfast by Peter our friendly host who has a pot of tea and a warm fire waiting for us. We are shortly joined by a cold Pete and Anna. The evening is spent in a small pub in Ypres square. We meet up with four Wing rider's Paddy, Vicki, Ray and Rose.

### Saturday (22/03/2008)

We rise at nine and eat a Rum Jar Belly buster breakfast. The weather is cold and grey, but we ride out anyway towards the French city of Arras; picking up the Wing riders on the way.

Just outside of Ypres, the weather comes in hailstones and freezing winds yet we plough onwards into Arras.

Through the city we ride, the group becomes separated. There are two bikes missing. Paddy comes over he has had a message on his CB radio there has been an accident. We race back through the city centre hearts racing trying to stick to the speed limit.

It turns out that the local French ladies like to play Death Race 2000 with passing bikers. One such lady has caused one of the Gold Wings to skid.

Whilst Pete Bradley and bike have parted company and the bike has taken the old lady off her feet. Pete's bike is quite badly damaged, he is shaken. The local French policemen take us back to the police station, where they make us wait for nearly an hour. During this time Sarah amuses the group by playing French guess a phrase with one of the policemen (she knows a little French!)

Alex helps Pete to make his bike roadworthy to get back to Ypres. The Gold Wing's paint work looks awful it's nearly new. We take a slow cold ride back to Ypres, returning to the Rum Jar for tea and sympathy with host Peter. As every one is shaken we decide to have a rest and go to Ypres later.

Evening arrives we attend the Menin Gate ceremony; some for the first time others once more. Tonight there is a piper and school orchestra, which add extra poignancy. Ceremony finished we head to Fanny's restaurant. Yes that is the landlady's name. One of the diners cant resist saying, "Are you not eating Fanny?" Everyone finds this amusing except Fanny who must think the English have a strange sense of humour!

### Sunday 23/03/2008)

We awake to find that it has been snowing. Pete and Alex race out to play like young school boys, writing rude captions on their bike seats.

After breakfast they decide to turn the dining room table into a REME work shop Anna and I watch with amusement as Alex, Pete and Peter repair the broken mirror from Pete's bike using a limited supply of tools.

Pete takes us on a scenic stroll around a snowy Ypres to wear off all the food and beer from previous night. The remainder of the day is spent loafing around in restaurants, trying out the food. We meet up with the Wing riders for the last time in the local British Legion.

### Monday (24/03/2008)

The snow has melted much to mine and Anna's relief. We eat our final breakfast and bid goodbye to Peter and the Rum Jar. We ride with Pete and Anna as far as Calais.

Home at last! Well Easter in Ypres was fun we could have done without the stress in Arras, But all said and done a good weekend was had by all. I would recommend Ypres to anyone.

*Sarah Poole*

Branch Member

The government tells us that we are eating too many pies and dying of Heart disease, then in the next breath they're telling us we are living too long and there'll be no more pension money left for us. I wish they'd make their minds up.



# Whats in your Box?

## So what's in your box?

A low speed tumble on a recent trip to France and Belgium last Easter had me emptying the contents of my bikes tool kit all over our guest house's breakfast table, as Pete and I set about making his bike safe for the trip home. After fixing the bike and making the temporary repairs I had done at the side of the road a little more permanent I thought it might be worth while passing on some of my experience from touring and enduro racing to allow everyone to have the right tools on their bike to get them moving again should you have a minor spill or breakdown. Modern motorcycles if maintained correctly tend to be reliable beasts but carrying some basic tools and a few useful spares will save you waiting at the side of the road for recovery and possibly missing the ferry home and the inconvenience of waiting for the next ferry (2 days Portsmouth/Bilbao).

So besides your credit card what else is useful? This is the minimum that I carry on my R1150 GS Adventure and XR400 when out and about on the mountains. When I did my solo overland trip I carried a lot more kit.

A good place to start is the tools that come with the bike. Replace them straight away with better quality tools in the same sizes. The last thing you need when you have had a minor breakdown on the dash back to the ferry, is to struggle with naff tools. I tend to add the extra tools I need to service the bike to my bike tool kit as and when I need them (a spoke key for example). This is a habit from the good old days of riding British steel and from racing when the difference between not having the right tool and pushing the bike was dependant on the tools you carried with you.

One of the most important things I carry is a spare nut & bolt kit. It includes lock wire, washers and common OEM sizes and many other nuts, bolts, chain O rings, a spare link, cable ties and such in a wide variety of sizes but mostly the sizes used on my bike. I carry this on both my street and dirt bikes.

The most likely failure you are going to suffer on a well maintained motorcycle is a puncture. You will need a good set of tyre levers. It is a myth that you need huge levers. I carry three 250mm levers and have used them to remove hundreds of tyres. A minimum of one spare tube for the largest wheel on your bike as it can be used on the smaller wheel if you are really pushed. A puncture repair kit and remember to change the glue regularly as it goes off with age. The GS has tubeless tyres but I still carry a tube because I have never had any luck with those tyre repair kits you can buy in accessory shops. A means of inflating the tyre, I carry air cylinders and the adaptor (don't loose the mesh that goes around the cylinder. It stops you getting a cold burn when it's used) a mountain bike hand pump that pumps on both strokes and on the GS I have the luxury of being able to use a 12 volt compressor. On the dirt bike I have managed to finish an event by cable tying the tyre to the rim. Not recommended on the road but on knobbles the cable tie fits nicely between the tread pattern and the stiff tyre wall will take the punishment if the speed is kept down. Don't wait until you have a puncture to practice the skills necessary to carry out a puncture repair. Practise and it won't seem so daunting when it happens to you.

Spares to be carried:  
Clutch and front brake lever  
Bulbs  
Fuses

Chain link

Spare cables these can be pre positioned on the bike to allow a quick change if you're racing but keep the end covered I use the fingers cut off rubber gloves and cable tied in place.

Spare spark plug

Spare weak part for your particular bike, only experience will let you know what this is. (On the GS the spark plug/coil can breakdown)

## My Tool Kit (see photo on page 4)

Items to include NOT shown in photo:

Tow rope (I use a one inch wide nylon strap which you can use to tie the front wheel to the centre stand to stop the bike falling off the stand when removing the rear wheel)

Instant Aluminium and/or steel.

Loc-Tite (Blue Loc-tite nearly everything on the bike before you leave)

Tape, Gaffers.

Wire, steel lock wire (excellent for stitching plastic panels together) and electrical cable

Feeler gauges.

Oil

Hand cleaner but the gloves are there.

Mole grips

Hope this helps - Ride Safe

*Alex*

## QM & Committee Member

## Fat Boy Straps.....

THE IMPORTANT BIT.

The cost is £14.00 per set this includes P&P.

I can order them individually but to keep the costs down I would like to place an order when I have 5 confirmed orders. Please indicate whether you wish RBLR or 3542 straps

(Photos on Page 13)

I will need cash (Cheques made payable to PHA Pollard) up front prior to placing the order and the address to send the monies to is 12 Grosvenor Road Crownhill Plymouth Devon PL6 5EH

As you can see by the pictures they are a standard popper size i.e. 10mm across the male bit and you will need to check your poppers to ensure that they are not an unusual size. Unfortunately my leather man cannot get odd popper size so you will just have to buy a new waistcoat with the right ones

Also as you can see the poppers only do up one way. If your vest does up the other way - women's? - please indicate and I will make sure that the poppers are put on the correct way.

That's it

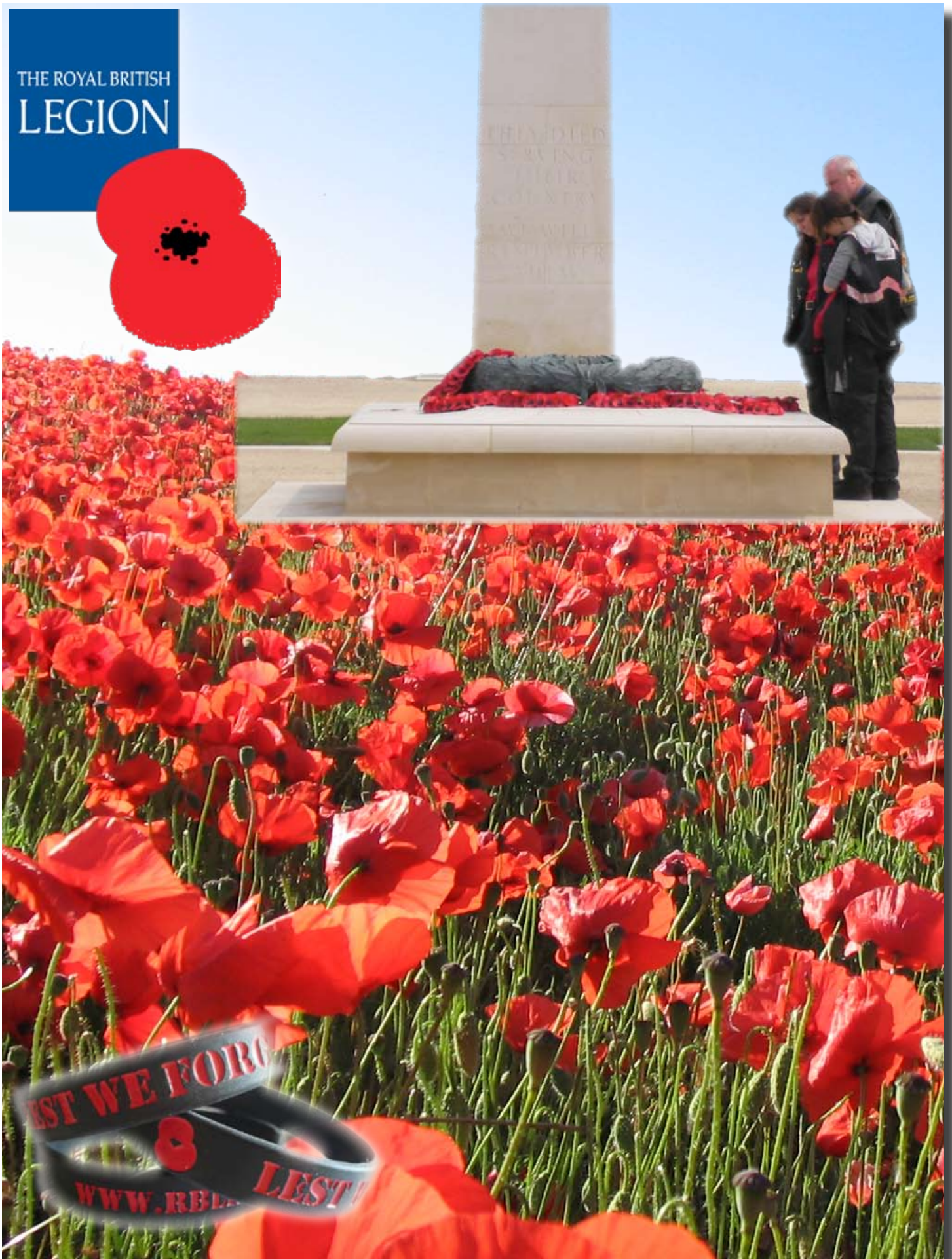
*Paul*

# The Royal British Legion - Riders Branch



# Lest We Forget.....

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION



# Caseworkers & Badge Guidelines

## What's involved in being a Welfare Caseworker?

Well first of all you apply to your regional office and get invited in for an interview.

This was formal in terms of the application and security clearance but informal in terms of the interview, for example, why are you interested in becoming a caseworker was asked, to which I replied well you are very short of them in the area I reside and learning more about what was available for applicants broadened my knowledge and understanding, which I can pass onto my clients.

Once you are security cleared you are invited to attend a two day training seminar which will familiarise you with the relevant forms that should be completed; what financial details are required, details of benefits claimed, grants etc. plus personal circumstances of the said individual and what help they are requesting, e.g. electric scooter; purchase of white goods, debt payment and counselling, etc. It also widens your knowledge as to what the legion has to offer in terms of respite breaks and what benefits or grants they can tap into and the checks they can make into ascertaining that the applicant is receiving the correct benefits, pension, etc. There is an awful lot of help available from the county office; and the knowledge factor will grow with time and experience of completing the relevant forms. The county office is just a phone call way to verify any details and check out inconsistencies.

The two trainers on my course were very informative, courteous and had a general interest in making sure all candidates were comfortable with issues raised. My fellow candidates did not just include legion members but also some from employment agencies, citizen advice bureau, etc. We also had some role play in completing forms and that in itself, whilst it appears quite a menial task, takes some concentrating in getting the right details down, especially financial figures and that's when you have the information readily available. In reality applicants applying for help do not have readily to hand their service papers for verification or complete knowledge of financial matters so it is a case of teasing this information out of them as far as you can and hoping that the county office can verify the service details for entitlement for help from the information you have collected. A case worker can always go back to obtain more details but when you are visiting it can be an hour and a half to two hours just to obtain sufficient information to complete the form and make the applicant feel valued.

How many cases you are invited to take on depends on who applies for assistance and how many caseworkers there are available in your area. Since January I have completed 5 applications for respite breaks at Somerset Legion House in Weston-Super-Mare (for ladies aged 80+) and assisted with 1 application for financial help for debt (for a 21 year old suffering from post traumatic stress disorder). I find it fascinating learning what the older service generation have been through; and also despite the hardship they are now suffering how isolated some of them feel. There are new dimensions of 'hardship' with the trauma of what is happening with our younger service. The range of 'hardship' is formidable.

The county office run regular yearly updates and I liaise regularly with my fellow caseworkers. Some of the more 'difficult' cases may involve the presence of two case workers so all the relevant details can be ascertained.

With the Riders' biker nights in Weston, I have told the ladies who hope to go on respite breaks at Somerset Legion House about them and if they are in residence at the time, would hope to get them across to meet the guys and girls collecting monies on the promenade for the poppy appeal (so we come full circle). I can also put my experience forward as evidence for Continuing Professional Development for my chiropody registration.

*Hilary Bloor*

Branch Member & Caseworker

## BADGE GUIDELINES June 2008

These are self explanatory and are based upon a common sense approach. Please read them carefully and approach their content in the spirit that it is written. The Officers of the Branch have a "Duty of Care" towards the members and if you choose to ignore any of the following for your own reasons then it is on your own onus and is not condoned by the Branch.

(These guidelines will also be posted in the Reference Section of the Forum for down loading if required.)

The original guidelines covering our badge on the web are still extant:

"The wearing of the Branch Badge is not mandatory but if worn, it is not worn next to anything offensive or that may bring TRBL into disrepute", all other badges worn are at the individual's discretion.

### **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT MEMBERS DO NOT WEAR ANY LARGE BADGES ON THEIR BACKS**

You should be aware that the wearing of a badge on your back, regardless of type, could earn you undue attention.

The following guidelines should be observed:

If you are asked to remove your waistcoat by any person(s), then you are to do as requested and to contact a Branch Officer with the details of the request. Do not attempt to explain why you wear your particular badge to the individual(s), as it is better for an official response from the Branch Officers. If you are uneasy with the situation then the advice is to leave the event.

The wearing of your waistcoat whilst journeying to and from an event should be viewed in the light of what type of event you are attending:

The size of the event that you are attending and/or who are the main organisers, is usually a good indicator on whether it is wise to wear a garment with a large back badge on it or not:

If you are attending any RBL/Military or Main Stream Event, then the choice is yours – common sense should prevail at all times.

These are designed to save you the embarrassment of any untoward attention from others that may not fully understand our aims, ethos, and what we represent and what the wearing of such badges mean to the individual.

We stress that these are guidelines and should be viewed as such. The choice, as always is with the individual however, please be aware of the possible consequences not only to

# Guidelines Cont. - Stafford Classic

yourselves but to the Branch in general.

If you are unaware of the reasoning behind these guidelines please contact your Regional Representative for further clarification.

*Paul Pollard*

Chairman  
The Royal British Legion Riders Branch  
BR 3542

## “Who are we?”

An Official Branch of the Royal British Legion; the Royal British Legion Riders are all motorcycle enthusiasts.

We can be found participating in Military Events, Motorcycling Shows and supporting the communities in which we live work and play.

The Royal British Legion Riders Branch was formed to support the aims and charitable efforts of The Royal British Legion and all members are encouraged to play an active role within the branch at Local and National level, with the emphasis on being pro-active in getting together with other branch members in their geographical area.

We aim to raise awareness of The Royal British Legion, and to raise funds for the Poppy Appeal.

Ride Safe All, Rubber Side Down,

Paul Pollard - Chairman

The Royal British Legion Riders Branch BR 3542

## Stafford Classic Bike Show 26th 27 April 2008

Finally managed to get to the show ground on Friday night at about 1730 after wending our way through a very congested M6 and found Ray Marrin and Bob waiting patiently for us. We emptied the car (RBLR Midlands Support Veh!) of all the kit and transported it all upstairs to our stand area. Within about 10 mins the stand was set up and all that was left to do was to call Val who was our chauffeur for the weekend.

Dave already had the barbeque going flat out with burgers, sausages, chicken and a cool box full of beer sitting at the side. An evening of banter, sandbag dragging and lantern swinging ensued until the wee small hours!

On Sunday we all awoke to the aroma of a full cooked breakfast and coffee, cooked up in plentiful quantities. Just as we were finishing Ray Cooper rang to say he was at the show ground. So we upped sticks and made our way there.

We spent the first hour or so of the morning sorting out details such as the bike details forms so that the machines could be judged and took it in turns to have a quick look around the main hall to see the other club stands so that we could decide who we would vote for the show prizes. Unfortunately the Riders

Branch stand took no prizes although Rays Harley should have taken reddest bike in show, had such a category existed!!!

Saturday was a very busy day with a constant stream of people filing past the stand (being located next to the bar and restaurant certainly saw to that!!!!) Although quite a few people expressed an interest in signing up, very few people actually seemed to be carrying bank details with them to be able to fill in the direct debit form on the membership applications, however quite a few went away saying they would sign up on-line and there were one or two who intended to transfer membership on-line too. We also had a couple of the chaps from the CMA (ex-marines I think) pop around to the stand for details.

At one stage a bloke with a camera and tripod seemed to be taking a keen interest in Bobs Honda, taking great pains over the detail of the photographs he was taking. It didn't take Bob long to realise that it was the editor of Classic and Motorcycle Mechanics (Maniacs?) Magazine. It turned out he was interested in possibly publishing an article about Bobs bike and he went away fully educated in all aspects of the Riders Branch and its good works! Hopefully a good contact for the future!!

During the course of the day we were visited by one of Staffordshires Poppy Appeal organisers and the Chairman of the Leek Branch.

We were also visited by Jimmy Torrance, Doc, and Gordon Duffy who took a turn on the stand to enable us to have a wander around the show and partake of a bit of lunch! During this time we also took the opportunity to seek out Nick Mowbray, the gentleman who organised our space at the show so that we could thank him in person.

Saturday drew to a close, and with all the punters having left the halls we packed up and made our way out to be collected by Val.

After a quick freshen up it was decided that the evening meal would be an eating out affair, followed by a visit to Stafford RBL. Dave knew of a very good Indian restaurant not too far away. After three days hike and a fresh pack horse and just around the next (dozen!) corners, we made it to the restaurant. After stuffing ourselves on the finest Indian cuisine served up by the only eastern European Indian waitress in the world, we made our way across town to the legion. After a couple of pints a little forgetfulness began to creep in (at least for Ray who couldn't seem to remember if he'd had his pudding!) Much smart thinking seemed to be the order of the evening and hence the idea of the non attendance rally was spawned; look out for such an event not happening anywhere near you soon!!

It was agreed that after the evenings activities it would be wise to hail a taxi to get us back to Dave and Vals. It was upon boarding said taxi that a new word to describe a larger built person happened to be coined! Bob found that being Svelte he found climbing in the back quite easy however Ray (grandad) being Svat found this a little more challenging!!

Sunday morning again greeted us with the sound of sizzling rashers, eggs and bangers and the smell of coffee wafting around the house (although some were awake before this; Mr Marrins chain saw was heard by several in the house during the early hours

Fed and watered we made our way to the show ground courtesy of Vals little green Rover (I doubt the suspension will ever be the same again after transporting us all over the weekend!).

# Stafford Classic Cont. & The Hairy Bikers

We arrived at the stand and prepared for another busy day. After setting the DVD player and projector up I went to the other side of the balcony to get some pictures of the scene in the main hall, as I did so the lady running the stall opposite ours made mention of the Video display, commenting on how professional it looked!! (Well done to our IT gurus!!!)

Ray Marrin took the chance during the quiet time before the bulk of the public turned up to get a few group shots with all of us in using the timer on the camera, which sparked the only incident of road rage we've ever seen involving a sporty mobility scooter. Just as he had set the timer and focus he stepped quickly to one side from behind the tripod and into the path of the fastest scooter on earth, earning him a tongue lashing from the lady piloting it!! Our profuse apologies seemed to do nothing to calm her down even though Ray really could have done nothing to avoid her! Amazingly about two hours later she rode up to the stand, said that she hadn't realised that there was a Legion stand at the show and put some coins in the poppy pot!!!

The focus of attention on the stand on Sunday seemed to be Ray Marrins Honda Goldwing, with a stream of people asking how much he would sell it for. Rays repeated answer was that it was not for sale "I'll never sell it!" He was heard to say on several occasions. In the mid afternoon eventually someone just happened to ask him if he knew what it was worth. "About two and a bit grand" said Ray, "Try nearer £xx000" says the bloke; "there were only 150 of those ones made!!!" Although he wouldn't divulge to the rest of us how much the bloke had quoted, Ray was last seen wandering off with persons unknown, looking to be in a state of shock, and asking rambling questions about train time tables to get home to Surrey. I was a bit surprised and shocked as well, the complimentary insurance that Footman James had arranged for our bikes on the stand at the show didn't come anywhere near what we suspected he'd been told his was worth!!

We had a few more visitors from the branch on Sunday, notably Alex and Sarah Poole, did you find anything nice for your birthday pressy, Alex? Neil Trinder and Mark Keeling popped up to offer support as well.

During the afternoon one of the ladies who organises the content for the editors of the some 14 publications that Moretons Media, have wandered up to the stand to see how we were, we took the opportunity to pass on one of our newsletters and flyers which she is going to show to some of the editorial staff to see if any further interest in the branch can be generated among them. I have to say she did sound quite positive about this, so we'll see!!

Late in the day one of the staff came up to verify the number of bikes we had on the stand we briefly chatted about the show in general and learned that the number of people through the gate on the Saturday totalled around 16,500 and Sunday would probably match that.

In the Afternoon the weather deteriorated and there was one of the biggest monsoons going with massive flashes of Lightning and this was to be what most people would end up riding home in!!

We dismantled the stand at around fiveish and relayed the kit back to the "support veh" before going our separate ways.

I rode home through Uttoxetter and Burton upon Trent thinking the further I got that I was quite lucky as I had seemingly

missed most of the rain! However once I got the other side of Burton the heavens opened big time and didn't let up for the rest of the way.

All in all a cracking weekend, thanks to all who came along, and especially to Dave and Val for being the perfect hosts, putting us up, feeding and watering us, and providing transport for the weekend. Thanks to Ray and Bob for your sterling efforts all weekend, and to all those of you who came along to support at various times over the weekend.

*1/00R*

Midlands Regional Rep

## Legion Riders Meet Hairy Bikers at The Market Kitchen

It all started when one of the Rider's Branch members, Ray Collins, had applied to appear on Market Kitchen, a UK TV Food Production. What seemed an age later Ray received an invite to appear on the show and subsequently found out the Hairy Bikers were appearing as guest chefs. Ray explained to the production company that Dave Myers, one of the Hairy Bikers was also a Riders Branch member and could some of the Rider's Branch Members take part. Little did Ray know this was to escalate and invites were sent out via the Riders Branch Website.

In no time at all, eight volunteers were signed up, all giving up their free time to attend, but then who wouldn't.

First day of filming was Wednesday 2nd April and we had to be there for 0815 hrs. That meant that some were leaving home around 0500 hrs just to make sure of the London traffic. En route two members Andy Sleep and Dave Bowen stopped at Reading services for a break, got chatting to a trucker who was ex Army and a biker and as a result he has joined the Branch.

Arriving on our bikes, we were greeted at the studios with coffee and a friendly smile, a great start, and met with other Branch Members. We were all there safely, Ray Collins, Pete Ticehurst, Andy Sleep, Andy Brown, Bob Cameron, Bob Cameron, Tom Wheeler, and Dave Bowen.

Our Bikes were parked in a secure car park about fifteen minutes ride away and we were taxied back to the studios.

On entering the studios we were greeted with other members of the "audience" and shown where to sit. We were all proudly wearing the Riders Branch badge and suitably attired as bikers.

During the day the layout of studio was changed around as different chefs prepared and cooked their meals. We, as the audience, were asked to taste and comment about the food with all Branch members at one point being interviewed on camera and asked what we thought about the food. First to be interviewed were Andy Brown, Bob Cameron and Tom Wheeler. Each passing comments about the food they had eaten. All of them performed for the camera as though they had been food critics all their lives. Of course they are, as all had eaten in various countries during their military careers and are well qualified to pass judgement on the food they have eaten.

Coffee and snacks were in abundance and there were waiters attending to us to really set off the café scene. In fact when it seemed that we were transfixed with watching the chefs, a waiter would come over and make polite chit chat with me and then ask us to talk amongst ourselves. This was to keep the café scene going.

# The Hairy Bikers Cont.

Highlight of the morning was when Andy Sleep took part in the wine tasting scene on how to taste white wine with wine expert Richard Weiss. Andy passed several comments on the wine he was tasting, all filmed for television. Andy who does in fact have a large selection of wine has now taken on the role of Rider Branch Wine Expert.

During the lunch break we were fed, strange as we had been eating throughout the morning. After lunch we were taken by taxi to the where we parked the bikes, and rode out onto the main road, lined our bikes up and were interviewed one at a time on camera about what food we liked and various cafes that were good for stop offs whilst riding. Again Andy Sleep came into his own when asked what was the most important thing about sharp knives. Andy's reply was not to stab yourself with them.

This shoot attracted a lot of interest for the public who wondered what was going on.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in the Studios filming with Clodagh McKenna and the Hairy Bikers plus Matt Tebbutt and Tom Parker Bowles. There was an Ultimate Burger Challenge between the Hairy Bikers and Matt Tebbutt with the audience voting on the best burger. The Winners were the Hairy Bikers although light hearted comments were made about the audience being biased. Their burger recipe was really good and nothing to do with the fact the Riders Branch made up the majority of the audience.

Next up was the kidney challenge the aim of which was to convert non kidney eaters to kidney. Around 50% of the audience didn't like kidney. After the challenge 33% of the audience still didn't like kidney so there were a few converts. However Andy Sleep and Dave Bowen remained stalwarts and were not converted with Dave commenting on the fact he didn't "do vital organs".

The finale for the day was a light hearted competition called "The Weakest Gourmet". Hairy Bikers versus Jay Rayner. The Hairies won, and had the biggest support from the Legion Riders.

This was the end of day one and most Branch Members had to go home. Day two began with Ray Collins, Bob Cameron and Pete Ticehurst all returning for the Curry Hell Challenge. This was an on air contest between the Hairy Bikers and Tom Parker Bowles to see who could eat the hottest curry. Curries ranged from Madras through to Vindaloos and Phalls. Our three Branch members performed admirably and Ray Collins managed to sign up Simon King (the other Hairy Biker) into the Riders Branch. We now have a celebrity duo as Branch Members.

All in all, a fantastic two days ably organised by Legion Rider Branch Member Ray Collins. This has resulted in great promotion of the Riders Branch and the Royal British Legion. Thanks must go to the production company, the presenters, the chefs and of course the Royal British Legion Riders Branch who really stole the show. That was a comment from Andy, one of the production team. Next on our list will be an appearance on a motorcycling programme. We'll just have to work out how we get in there.

*Dave Bowen*

PR Officer Royal British Legion Riders Branch.

## Membership

Branch membership continues to grow at an impressive pace! 160 new members joined in April & May alone, which equals the number we recruited in the whole of our first year of existence. During May we achieved the 1000th member milestone, and now, a mere month later, we have already passed 1100. At this rate we should double our membership this year.

Everyone can join, and everyone can recruit. New members should complete an MS4 application form, and there is a downloadable version on the website at [http://www.rblr.co.uk/N\\_membership.html](http://www.rblr.co.uk/N_membership.html). If someone wishes to transfer to Riders from another RBL Branch they must complete an MS7 form, which can also be down loaded from the website. Please make sure all sections are correctly completed and signed to avoid delay, then send them to **Membership, RBLR, 20 Higher Wood, Bovington, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 6NF**.

Should someone be strange enough not to want to join the Riders Branch, but does wish to join the Legion, get them to complete a MEM20 form.

Statistically, the average age of Branch members is 45, so come my next birthday I will no longer be younger than the average age. If only I was also the average weight, I'd be happy!

*Martyn White*

## Membership Secretary.



'Alton Towers - Where the magic never ends', or so the commercial says.

Imagine my disappointment when it closed at 7.30.



I am married to a Taiwanese lady, and people often ask me if she was a Mail-order bride. I find this very insensitive. The Royal Mail lose Around 2 million letters and parcels each year, and to suggest that I Would trust the delivery of my wife to them is insulting in the extreme.

She was sent by DHL next day delivery.



The record companies would have us believe that the money made by CD Pirates goes to fund the drug industry. But the money rock stars make From legal record sales ends up in exactly the same place. When they Stop breaking the law, so will I.



It really annoys me to see these suicide bombers blowing up people as well as themselves. In my day, suicide was done in a more dignified way, Such as Slicing your wrists in the bath, or hanging yourself from a door with a Belt.



Did anyone else feel that Mel Gibson's remake of the classic Life of Brian wasn't anywhere near as funny as the original?

# Iron Butt, Fat boy Straps & NI



How many Royal Marines does it take to screw in a light bulb? 5, four take the corners of the house, lift it, turn it clockwise, while the fifth Royal Marine holds the light bulb and turns it counter clockwise.



In Memory of

## WO2 (RQMS) 'Eddie' Mackay

Legion Group plc, A Brief History:

IN 1927 THERE WERE 500,000 FORMER SERVICE PERSONNEL UNEMPLOYED MANY OF THEM ALSO DISABLED

In Belfast in 1928 Men in Caps, with Legion Armbands and Collecting Tins were sited at city car parks to collect gratuities "Mind your Car Sir". Funds collected were pooled and each man received a few shillings a week.

The Belfast programme was so successful it was soon extended to more Branches and areas of The Legion. These activities were controlled locally and run independently of each other.

As a result of the Companies Act of 1929 greater control was needed and a series of companies were set up entitled:-

The British Legion (Named Area) Car Parking Company Limited Local Legionnaires were co-opted to become Local Board Members and from the members; Local Board Directors were elected. Each company was Autonomous and so from a small beginning a number of companies came into being.

All with the intent of providing employment for ex-service personnel. Eventually all the separate companies were united under one single name on the 14th April 1972 it became:- **The Royal British Legion Attendants Company Limited.**

The RBLA continued to trade under this name for many years and employed thousands of former service personnel.

My father Eddie Mackay, being one of them, sought similar employment after retiring from the army and therefore 'enlisted' in his second 'military type' career with the RBLA.

To give you a brief pen picture of his career before he joined the RBLA he enlisted as a drummer boy in the 1st Bn Gordon Highlanders in 1938 and was shipped to India in 1942. Dad trained as a signaller/gunner and was a corporal car commander with Recce Troop. Later in Burma he was used as a replacement at times as a gunner or radio op/loader in Sherman tanks or .30in bow gunner. When not in a tank crew, he had a fairly free role following different squadrons as Cpl Vehicle Commander (Jeep) with a crew of 2 in Recce/Intercom Tp having a fairly hairy time with the Japanese air force while pushing up to Pegu 40 miles north of Rangoon .

After the war he was posted to Gosport to SADE (Special Armoured Development Estb) until 1951, operating DD tanks, Buffaloes & DUKW. He served with 3rd & 7th RTR before being demobbed from 8th RTR in 1952. After becoming disillusioned with civvy street, Dad re-enlisted in the same year as a Sgt Drill Instructor at Bovington and was on the permanent staff of the Boys Squadron Royal Armoured Corps. He then joined 2 RTR in Munster and it was with 2 RTR he had various tours of duty in Libya, Malta (CMPE, Combined Military Penal Estb) and Colchester (MCTC, Military Corrective Training Centre), N Ireland, Germany and on to his final posting as RQMS with the Junior Leaders Regiment at Bovington and retirement from the Army in 1975 after 37 years.

Although after his retirement, attending functions was not really his scene, he didn't leave his military career far behind by joining the Royal British Legion Attendants Company in 1976, after serving with Trans-European inspecting imported Citroen cars which again didn't suit his army background so donning a uniform again for a further 10 years he joined RBLA at Poole Docks fully enjoying his time there as a Security Supervisor before finally hanging up his cap in 1986. [Legion Group plc](#)



Dad passed away peacefully in November 2007 and fondly remembered his time there and spoke highly of the people he worked with which to some extent comes from their military backgrounds and what today gives the Royal British Legion Attendants Company Trust (RBLACT) its professionalism.

*Gordon Mackay*

Media Support Wing - Bovington

## UK Iron Butt 2008 (Brit Butt)

For the uninitiated, the Iron Butt Association (IBA) was formed in the USA (with a name like that it couldn't be anywhere else!) And although the official formation date is a bit hazy it is now an international organisation with over 15,000 members worldwide. You cannot join just by paying an annual subscription, in fact, there are no subscriptions. Membership is gained by completing a fully documented ride that conforms to the organisation's rules.

Every two years, the IBA hold their Iron Butt Rally in the USA. This consists of riding a minimum of 1000 miles in 24 hours – for 11 consecutive days. The number of riders is deliberately kept small and the events are always massively over-subscribed. Being an island the size of the UK it would be almost impossible to replicate that, not to mention very boring having to go over the same ground time and again, however, the third weekend in May saw the very first UK based Iron Butt Rally aptly named the 'Brit Butt Rally', which is to complete 1110 miles in 36 hours. Unfortunately, its not as simple as just going from A-Z and all points in between. Competitors have to visit 'Bonus Locations' along the way and accrue a minimum set of points as well as the mileage. This year, the minimum points were set at 25,000. In order to achieve this, competitors were issued with their bonus locations in the form of 60 sheets of paper in random order at 2030 on the Friday night, it was then up to them to plot the locations onto maps and/or into GPS units (all must be plotted in order to find the most efficient route). At 0530 on Saturday morning, all riders had to be in the car park and on their bikes ready for the final odometer checks before the start at 0600.

The Branch was fortunate in having (originally) 3 riders selected for the rally, however, this number would grow to 5 before the rally was over and didn't they do well!

In second place, new member Paul Vandersteen  
In third place, Paddy McCreanor  
In sixth place, new member Lee Whiteley  
In eleventh place, Martyn White  
DNF, Tony Carr

### Martyn White

I had been looking forward to the rally but was a bit daunted by the prospect of having to cover at least 1110m in 36hrs. Although I have confidence in my route planning abilities, I foolishly assumed everyone else was more experienced than me, so talked myself out of any chance of a good finish before we had even started! I set off from Stoke on Saturday at 0600 and was at the top of the Isle of Skye at 1430! Once north of Glasgow, the next 12hrs were the best I have ever enjoyed on a bike! Fantastic roads and views in the highlands, and the sun was out all day. Picked up various highland bonuses before turning south at 2000. I got very cold late Saturday evening and stopped for fuel at Kinross but couldn't stop shivering. Decided I had to get a room for my 3hr rest stop, just to get warm. Everywhere was full, as it was a Bank Holiday, so I ended up riding on down to Edinburgh and checking into a Novotel at 1145. Stopping would mean having to wait until 0845 to get across the causeway to Holy Island. That meant I could stay at the hotel until 0730, and have a good rest, but as I stopped for 8hrs and not 3, I expected a very low finish. I looked at alternative routes but sticking to my original plan still made the most sense. I arrived back at the finish with 45mins to spare, having been to

Scarborough and a few smaller bonus locations after Holy Island. I was delighted to discover that I had placed 11th, despite the long stop, and can only wonder what I could have achieved with some warmer clothing. It has made me keen to try again next year, and armed with some heated clothing and a more positive attitude from the start, I'll be back!!

### Paddy McCreanor

The riders' meeting was over with fairly quickly on the Friday evening and by half past midnight I had planned a route that would take me north up the west coast to Scotland, to the Isle of Skye and to Scourie in the north west, John O'Groats in the north east and then back to the starting point at Stafford via Lindisfarne, the Angel of the North and the Peak District. I had a calculated journey of around 1400 miles in about 28 hours. Once you add in 15 min per fuel stop, 10 min per photograph and a 3 hour rest break, you begin to see how tight time really was going to be. The one real imbuggerance that happened during this process was that my laptop overheated and crashed. Fortunately I had made a pen and paper list of my route, but it could have caused so much strife – note to self, remember to "save" often!

On the Saturday we assembled outside the hotel for the off and at 0600 I rode off to my first bonus point location only a few miles away at Sandbach.

I was delighted to see other bikes arriving as I was leaving because at least this proved I was heading in the right direction (maybe). The Jodrell Bank telescopes came next and then Lancaster Services followed by the statue of Eric Morecombe in Morecombe. This proved to be a difficult one for me as I couldn't pin point the statue and must have wasted at least 20 min looking for it. The same thing was to happen again in Bentpath looking for the Thomas Telford memorial – I went to the wrong (current) Church. The memorial is outside the old church which is in fact a library.

Anyway, at this moment in time the weather was OK if a little cloudy, but the further north I rode, the better it got. By the time I was north of Glasgow on the way to the Isle of Skye, it was fantastic. Blue sky, bright sunshine and great roads.

On the way to and from the northern tip of Skye where the bonus points were located I found myself sharing the road with my fellow competitors, once again a heartening sight as it least it meant I might be doing something right.

From Skye to Scourie via Ullapool and on the way a detour towards Inveness looking for fuel – it's a hard thing to come by in the north of Scotland after 7 or 8pm. At Scourie I was in another fuel quandary – my next scheduled stop was due to be John O'Groats, about 150 miles away and I had enough fuel for about 80 miles. Should I risk it and hope I find a 24 hour pump en-route, or should I turn back towards Inverness for a longer way round, but at least be sure of getting fuel. It was at that stage that I spotted the "24/7" notice on the tiny single pump fuel station in Scourie and then knew that I could make John O'Groats in one go.

So off I set, it was now about 9 pm and the sun was getting low. Fortunately at that stage I didn't realise that I wouldn't see anything more than a single track road (with passing places) for the next 100 miles or so, or maybe I would have gone to Inverness after all.

Wildlife was also a danger now, as dusk grew wild and domestic animals seemed to spill out onto the road willy-nilly. The biggest was a huge Stag deer that just stood in front of me but fortunately leapt out of the way as I got closer.

By the time I got to Thurso, I was not feeling too tired but I spied what appeared to be a not-too expensive hotel and pulled in. What a bargain! £25 bed and breakfast, I was only disap-

# Iron Butt 2008 Cont. & Humour.....

pointed in the fact that I would be up and gone in 3 hours and wouldn't be able to avail myself of the breakfast.

After Thurso, on to John O'Groats and after this I had to do some recalculation and drop some smaller bonus point locations in order to ensure that I finished at the optimum time (just before 1700, there was 50 point per minute penalty for finishing after this time). I also realised that my chances of making a big bonus point location in Scarborough was also too risky and so I dropped this one too.

Fuel was still an issue and after Wick my next fuel stop was Aviemore where I met another competitor, Mick, from the Geordie Chapter of HOG. He had hit a deer with his bike and killed it and although the bike was quite badly bashed up, it was rideable and he was OK. The only real problem was the smell. He had jet washed it 4 times since mashing the deer and it still stunk (or maybe it's just that Harleys are always like that).

From Aviemore it was just a matter of plodding on with my now heavily adjusted route as fuel was now widely available. The next drama for me was finding the Fat Cat pub in Sheffield.

There has been a lot of regeneration work in Sheffield and so the whole town centre has changed. I eventually stumbled across it and then headed back to Stafford via the Peak District. Being a Bank Holiday Sunday, I had to fight my way through miles of slow moving tourist traffic, but I eventually got back at 1650 and incurred no penalty points.

After booking in, it was a quick shower and then a points tally. I didn't keep track of my points as they were verified so I had no idea what I may have scored, but I knew I had over 25,000, so I was a finisher.

When it came to the awards which were made in reverse order I was stunned to not hear my name mentioned until we were into the top 3.

Yep 3rd. Not bad. Congratulations to Robert Roalfe who won with 40,262 points and 1505 miles and to Paul Vandersteen who was second with 39,805 and 1562 miles. I ended up with 39,301 points and 1504 miles.....and the points not obtained by not going to Scarborough, Fair or no Fair.....1511. Ah well, there is always next year.

## Tony Carr

Having competed in the BMF National Rally many times I was surprised at the amount of planning needed to complete the Iron Butt. I got to bed at 0200 on the Saturday morning and after 3 hours I was up, showered and on the bike for 0530. My route took me south (one of only 4 riders out of the 50 competing) to do so. All was going well or so I thought, until I texted Martyn at around 0330 on Sunday morning to tell him I was grabbing a half hour's kip on a trailer in Exeter Services with high winds and rain lashing down only to have him text back saying he was very warm, dry and comfortable in a hotel in Edinburgh. Definitely RAF material!! I covered 1257 miles and arrived back at Control HQ with 22 minutes to spare only to find that my rest period had been taken at the wrong time and that I had lost 5000 points. This meant that I did not have enough points to finish and to that extent I was recorded as a DNF. Not to worry though, it won't happen next year!

Finally a big thank you to the rally team, especially Chris McGaffin (the Rally Master) and Roger Allen (President, UK & Europe Operations, Iron Butt Association). For further details go to [www.ironbuttkrally.info](http://www.ironbuttkrally.info)

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CIVVY FRIENDS AND MILITARY FRIENDS

(One persons view)!

CIVVY FRIENDS: Get upset if you're too busy to talk to them for a week.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Are glad to see you after years, and will happily carry on the same conversation you were having last time you met.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Never ask for food.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Are the reason you have no food.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Call your parents Mr. And Mrs.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Call your parents mum and dad.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Bail you out of jail and tell you what you did was wrong.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Would be sitting next to you saying, Bollocks, we messed Up, but that was fun!"

CIVVY FRIENDS: Borrow your stuff for a few days then give it back.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Keep your stuff so long they forget it's yours.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Know a few things about you.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Could write a book with direct quotes from you.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Will leave you behind if that's what the crowd is doing.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Will kick the whole crowds ass that left you.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Would knock on your door.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Walk right in and say, "I'm home!"

CIVVY FRIENDS: Are for a while.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Are for life.

CIVVY FRIENDS: Will take your drink away when they think you've had enough.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Will look at you stumbling all over the place and say, Mate, you better drink the rest of that, you know we don't waste, "That's alcohol Abuse!!"

CIVVY FRIENDS: Will talk shite to the person who talks shite about you.

MILITARY FRIENDS: Will knock them out!!!



## The Future?

On a recent Recruiting Advisors' course, our trainer reckoned the Riders branch were part of the future of the Royal British Legion. So, given that statement you may be asking why? Well we :-

**Are the fastest growing branch**

**Display a positive attitude**

**Actively recruit and appeal to a wider age range, including females**

**Have a 'corporate' image – e.g. clothing and accessories with rider branch badges, motifs, etc.**

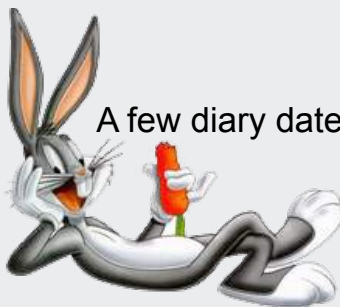
**Support county run events as well as run our own**

**Have fun as well as raise money for the poppy appeal**

So keep up the good work, people are taking note.....

*Hilary*

# Memorial Run & Diary Dates



A few diary dates

Bike Nights Thursdays till 28 August - Weston-Super-Mare  
Northern Region Rally 12-14 September - Millom  
Bunny "Drei" 19-21 September - Yeovil  
Riders Rock Rally 1-3 August - Felixstowe  
AGM & Remembrance Weekend 8-9 November - Oldbry  
Hero not Zero Gig 15 November - Thornbury  
NAR Rally 21 December - Santas Grotto.....



## TOUR

### INCLUDES

- Channel Tunnel Tickets
- Half Board Hotel in Soest
- Secure Parking
- Guided tours of four dams
- Visits to Willingen, Winterberg, Diemelsee

# DAMBUSTER

## Motorcycle Tours

A four day luxury motorcycle tour of the beautiful Ruhr Valley, Germany

## Motorcycle Tour - 2009

Dambuster Motorcycle Tours offer a four day luxury guided tour of the Ruhr Valley in Germany, at very competitive prices, visiting the Dams which were made famous by the bombing raids during WWII. The tour is primarily for members of the Riders Branch and as such will receive a considerable discount, however, non-members may also participate but will pay the full price (so its cheaper to join up!)

For full details please email [tonyadson40@hotmail.com](mailto:tonyadson40@hotmail.com)

# Photos & Calendar 2008



RLC Bomb Disposal & The Riders - Catterick - June 08



The Riders Branch 2009  
Calendar Available soon!



Cardiff Vets Day - June 08

# The National Rally 2008 & 2009 Calendar

## National Rally 2008

This years National Rally was held in the grounds of Ratcliffe College in Leicestershire.

The advance party of Roger (Blackdog) Mills, Antony (Fozzie) Foster the rally QM and his family, Albie, Sammy Starbuck, Garry Edwards, Ivor, Cally and family arrived at Middy on the Thursday to set up the site for the Festivities. Over the afternoon a few more willing volunteers arrived among them Terry Wilson and his family, Dee and Katie, and Mandy and Angie. Several hours of graft saw the site set up just in time for the heavens to open, so all work was called to a halt and we set to work demolishing a case or two of Rogers's beer!

Day one of the rally dawned, a few more hours of set up and sorting out of goody bags for the masses, and by late morning the first arrivals were riding on to the site, being signed in by Roger and escorted to the camping area by Albie. A big thanks to Mandy and Angie for being on the gate for the whole day to greet people as they arrived! And huge praise to Sammy and Garry for the seemingly endless flow of very welcome cups of tea.

The Friday evenings entertainment was provided by Stevie and his mandolin and Creatures disco which kept everyone boogying until the small hours.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny after Ivor had a word with the big man upstairs and asked him to sort things out! More people were arriving all the time to join the party but the morning's peace and general tranquillity was shattered by the intermittent testing of the college fire alarms, which put several halts on the Branch committees' meeting which was being held in the main hall and no doubt didn't please anyone with a bad head from the night before!!

In the Afternoon two ride-outs left the site at one o'clock after a photo session outside the colleges imposing facade, one to Newarke Air museum, led by Paul Langman and followed up by Sammy Starbuck, and one to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire led by Ivor and followed up by Mark Edwards. During the afternoon on the rally site, those not out on the runs were encouraged to join in the silly games and the pitch and putt golf on the colleges' four hole golf course. Albie became known as the "Pied Piper of Ratcliffe" for his outstanding abilities at entertaining the younger element of our rally goers, getting them involved in all manner of activities including treasure trails and the judging of the bikes for the awards in the evening.

The Saturday evening theme was St. Trinians and quite a few people got into the spirit of things with quite a few costumes appearing from bike panniers (some, it has to be said, much more disturbing than others!!!) We weren't too sure how the pirate came to be part of the theme, but when approached he asked us if we had ever heard of "Pirates of the Caribbean do St. Trinians?" Evidently coming to a cinema near you soon!!

The evenings Hog Roast was devoured in double quick time, washed down by beer from the bar which was supplied by Alan and Richard and assisted by their excellent staff with all drinks at very reasonable prices. Anyone who was still hungry after the hog roast could fill up at Nicky's Snack bar, who along with her girls kept everyone fed with fantastic food all weekend and for amazing value for money!!

The party rolled on with an award ceremony with Albie acting as master of ceremonies with prizes for the silly games, distance awards, bike awards, fancy dress prizes and the sweepstake to guess the number of attendees to the rally, which was won by Chris Smith, The Head teachers choice went to a delightful little Meriden Triumph Twin, best custom to a brilliantly painted Rocket 3, first prize for the fancy dress went to Rick Laing, Dee and Katie won the long distance female award, Dee also won the Best bike, Grottiest bike went to Smiler, and unfortunately a beer and Morgan's rum-induced amnesia means I've forgotten to whom the rest of the Awards went!

The Hoosemairtes, a local three piece band, gave a brilliant performance over the evening with their own brand of Irish folk rock, keeping the tempo going almost all evening, the beer flowed, the banter rattled back and forth and a good time was had by all!!

Sunday Morning awoke damp and drizzly but as we had to clear the site by Middy to hand back to the college, everyone was up helping to clear the tentage, rubbish, mine tape and general clobber that goes to make up the rally site. By lunch time every one had left for home with just the set up crew remaining to finish things off and hand over the site, Shaun, the colleges caretaker was hugely impressed with how things had been left and said that we'd left less of an impression than some of the caravan clubs that use the site and that by the time the grounds were mown we'd never know that anyone had been there!!

In all there were about 300 people attending the rally by the time guests and children were accounted for, making for an excellent atmosphere, which could be enjoyed by families and party animals alike, and if you missed it, you missed out!! I think I can speak for the whole of the Rally Committee when I say that it was a great privilege and enormous fun to help organise this year's event.

Roll on Rally 2009!!!!

*Ivor* Committee (Main & Rally)

## Coming soon: the Riders Branch 2009 Calendar

After months of effort the "Calendar Committee" has put together what we hope will be a great calendar that everyone will want to hang on their wall.

We hope to have the calendar available for sale by the end of August or early September – so watch out for this on the Forum where full details will be promulgated. They will also be available at many of the events the Branch attend thereafter.

Potentially, this could raise a considerable amount of money for the Poppy Appeal. Thank you to all the members who sent pictures in for consideration and of course to George White Superbikes – whose sponsorship has made this possible.

Start thinking now and taking pictures for 2010!

*Tony Lewis*

National Sponsorship Co-ordinator.

# Cardiff 08 & The Chairmans "Dit"

## CARDIFF VETERANS DAY 14 June 2008

In 2007 The Branch was invited to attend Cardiff Veterans Day which was held in Millennium Square in Cardiff Bay, Dave (Rael) Thomas, Alex Poole and I attended, and with a great deal of help from Carl Pugh (RPMO) we had what was a day out. The stands for Veterans Agency's (RBL, SAFFA, RAFA etc.) were nowhere near the events for the day and hence we had very few visitors. So when asked if we were to attend this year I agreed with some doubts as to whether it would be a good idea, so a few bikes supported Sid from The Vale of Glamorgan (VoG) RBL.

Glyn (Kingo), Sarah, Alex and I had to be at Cardiff Castle at 0930, as we left in plenty of time we had a sedate trundle along the M4. On arrival at the Castle we were held up briefly due to the late arrival of the Army! We then pitched up next to VoG RBL marquee.

We were entertained throughout the day by a skiffle band, The Swansea Pipe band and The RAF St. Athens Voluntary Band with The Dowlias Male Voice choir (well we are in Wales).

There were other events taking place around the Castle grounds some celebrating TA100, all of which we missed due to being inundated with people wanting to know more about The Branch, some congratulating us on the achievements we have made in the short time we have been in existence. We were joined by Rick who was a welcome addition to our numbers due to the interest. Sarah was gainfully employed working alongside Sid in his Marquee.

We did manage to sign one new member on the day but I expect many other members to come from the day due to the interest received.

Many thanks to Sarah, Alex, Rick and special thanks to Kingo for making the 350+ mile round trip to support The Branch.

*Ian*

Wales & Ireland Regional Rep  
(and all round good egg)!

## Chairman's End Dit

End of June already and we are heading full speed for our 1200th member. There has been a tremendous amount of activity from all quarters of the UK with many new faces getting out and doing their bit. Fantastic PR with The Hairy Bikers, Hayley Westenra and of course The Weston Bike Nights not to mention our 2nd National Rally which was a HUGE success and a fitting reminder of how much effort members make to ensure that everything is a success.

Much has been said about the closure of many bike shows over the summer and as everyone on a personal level agrees it is a great shame, not only for the punter with nowhere to go but also to the little trader who has just watched his bonus disappear in the wind. Whilst it affects us individually, as a Branch there is much more that we can do by promoting the Legion across the country at smaller rallies, obscure events and RBL sponsored shows – of which I am happy to say many members are already doing.

The efforts of the Regions and individual Counties, is becoming very important in the way we project ourselves and winning us new friends wherever we appear. We are even being asked to join County Committees!

The issue of large badges on the backs of riding apparel, has visited us and a set of guidelines have been produced. Some of you are not happy, many agree but at the end of the day our aims as always are "to have fun and raise money for the Poppy Appeal". If we can do that without irritating anybody over trivial matters such as these, then we can all agree "that is a good choice".

On a more personal note it is good to see fellow Riders who staunchly deride all things Harley's succumbing to the lure of a proper "motorcycle" and becoming the bad bros we all love to laugh at and hey, next time you see me on the side of the road

– I'm having a rest!

Ride Safe, Rubber Side Down

*Paul*

Chairman "The Riders"

They shall grow not old  
as we that are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them  
nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in  
the morning

We will remember them

When You Go Home,  
Tell Them Of Us And Say  
For Their Tomorrow  
We Gave Our Today

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