

CENTENARY AWARD FOR BRANCH CHAIRMAN



Jim McDermott (hair by Blown Away)!

Branch Chairman

Jim McDermott was surprised, pleased and honoured to have received a Legion Membership Centenary Award in the Collaboration category. The award, which comes with the certificate shown along with a special centenary badge (inset) is related to Jim's work in organising and running the fundraising appeal for the Y Services Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. *"Of course, it was all the people who donated to the appeal which made it such a success."* Jim told our reporter. *"And I would like to thank whoever nominated me along with thanks to the great team that form the Branch Committee, for their support"*

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Andy Marchant, in the News.

An inspiring story of dedication to his local Community.

Full story on page 3

Branch Chairman's Message

I hope everyone is keeping fit, safe and well. I agonized over whether I should place myself on the front page, me being such a shy and retiring sort of chap, but decided that if it had been anybody else then I would have! The best news is 8 new members! Some great contributions this month leaving little room for our full fundraising advertisement. Yes, the easy and painless way to raise Poppy Appeal funds; just sign up to easy-fundraising if you haven't already:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservice/s/?invite=1DZNV&referral-campaign=s2s>

Jim McDermott Branch Chairman

A very warm RBL Y Services welcome to 8 new members

Philip Hoper
Richard Thompson
Harry Chatterton
Andrew Barber
Steve Clarkson (Oscar)
Mark Findlater (Finn)
Robert Hodgson (Bob)
Martin Smyth



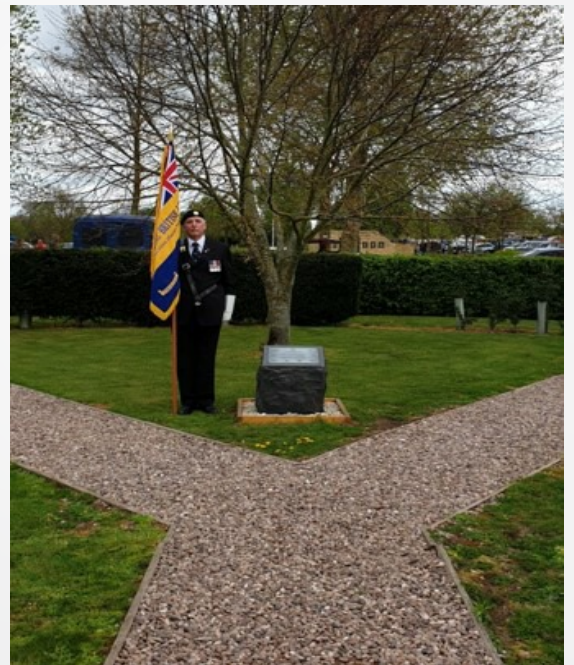
An Update from our Branch Standard Bearer

Obviously all very quiet Standard parading wise, whilst the current lock-down restrictions are in place we are not even allowed to 'stand around' with our standards at any formal event! There is now 'hope' that ceremonial appearances of the Branch Standard will be back on the cards this year as C-19 lock-down measures are progressively eased. Guidance from the Legion Ceremonial Working Group is awaited.

One event that has already been confirmed is the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall during Remembrance Week-end in November. 'We' should have attended last year and the nomination has been brought forward due to last year's FoR cancellation.

Other events are likely to include:

Armed Forces Day - late June
NBD Standard Bearer Competition – September 2021
'Y' Services Memorial re-dedication - September 2021
Remembrance Sunday at Woodhouse – November 2021
Birmingham International Tattoo - late November 2021



Editorial note:

Contributions to this monthly Branch Newsletter are always welcome on any topics members think will be of general interest. We aim to provide uplifting stories and attempt not to duplicate messages already sent from RBL HQ. Copy should be sent by email, to the editor Jim McDermott at jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com Preferred format is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately as JPEGs.

An Error corrected and a New Feature

In the February issue, one of our Branch poets, John Berry, was incorrectly described as having served in the past as Branch Chairman: this is not the case. To correct this error, John kindly provided a mini biog to set the record straight.. See page 8.

Asking John to provide a mini biog triggered the idea within the editorial executive for a new item: "I wonder what happened to old so and so?" If you would like our esteemed membership to know a bit more about you but in particular how you fared in the big bad world of civvie street, then please do submit around 100-200 words along with a pic or pics if you wish and we will feature these items in future issues. Something like:

'Harry Guthrie. I joined the army in 1960 trained as a Spec Op at Garats Hay, served in Cyprus, Germany and Belize. Left the army in 1980 having rocketed to the rank of full corporal. I opened my egg cup repair shop in Dorking and now own a chain of shops throughout Europe and North America. I am married to Constance. We have 4 kids and live in South Uist. I enjoy gardening, amateur radio and knitting my own socks. [See panel to left for details of how to submit articles]

Y Services Memorial Garden – Re-Dedication at the NMA

Following completion of refurbishment work and subject to there being no restrictions, we plan to hold a ceremony to re-dedicate the Y Services Memorial plot at the NMA in Alrewas, Staffordshire on Tuesday 7 September 2021. The outline programme is as follows:

1400 Assemble at the memorial

1415-1445 Re-dedication Service.

From 1445 onwards members and guests free to admire our new memorial garden and to visit the remainder of the Arboretum.

It is suggested that those attending might want to arrive well before the ceremony and have lunch in the NMA restaurant.

Note that due to Covid-19 restrictions, as at the date of this newsletter, there is a requirement to book in advance to visit the NMA. See: [Home | National Memorial Arboretum \(thenma.org.uk\)](https://www.thenma.org.uk)

Updates on this requirement as we get nearer to the event.

Help needed: We would greatly appreciate it if a member or members could volunteer to take on the role of official photographer and also that of videographer so that we can produce a proper record of this important event. Please contact

Secretary John Swann via email yserVICES.secretary@rbl.community if you would like to volunteer.

Attendance

It will greatly help with organising the event if members who plan to attend could advise Branch Secretary John Swann via email yserVICES.secretary@rbl.community by 31 May 2021

A short message is all that is needed at this stage, something along the lines of *"Yes, I plan to attend the rededication ceremony on 7 September 2021. I will be accompanied by [as appropriate]."*

Having a gathering of members presents a great opportunity for a social get together and a dinner evening (at your own expense of course) is planned at the Shoulder of Mutton pub. Branch Vice Chairman Dennis Weir is organising the evening function and if you would like to attend please contact Dennis by email on: yserVICES.vicechairman@rbl.community

Please note that nil returns, for the re-dedication or the evening event are NOT required. For those not familiar with the term 'nil returns' it means if you do not plan to attend you do not need to tell anybody or send apologies.

Plea for Help - Chicksands Memorial Garden.

Members may have seen a news item in the media recently which relates how an Army officer has restored a WW2 'secret garden' at Chicksands Priory. See the full story at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-56442771>

Connected to this story is a plea from Branch member Clive Kidd, who is part of a group with an interest in the WW2 Radio Security Service [RSS]. He wonders if any of our Branch members who may have served or visited Chicksands has any photos of the memorials in the garden and if so would they be willing to share them with the wider world? If you can help please contact Clive direct on email: cjkidd@waitrose.com



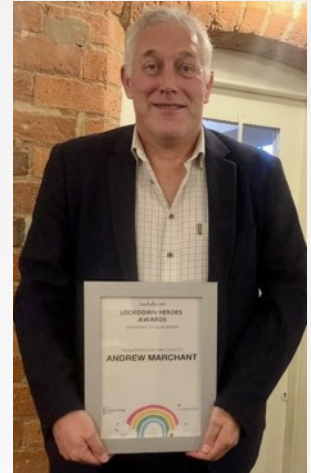
A walled garden in the home of a former top-secret World War Two listening post has been restored by a team of volunteers

Andy Marchant - Lockdown Hero

So how has been your last year.... ?

Branch member Andy Marchant was spotted being interviewed on National TV news and we asked him to tell his inspiring story. Well done that man.

Following a tour at Digby in 2002, it was decided by my family and I to set down some roots in Lincolnshire. After 9 years as a 'Weekend Dad' I returned to Digby in 2011 to complete my career, eventually retiring in 2017. Having already settled the family, I embraced being involved in village life in Branston, just 3 miles SE of Lincoln and for the past ten years I've served as a Parish Councillor and the lead for Emergency Planning. Additionally, for the past 5 years I have been a Lincolnshire Police Support Volunteer, one of 23 trained to support Op REVIVE and I'm the Chairman of the Resilient Lincs Steering and Governance Group. Getting back to local emergency planning, one of our primary focusses, being so close to RAF Waddington, was on an air accident, or severe weather and the probability of dealing with a global pandemic was always regarded as 'it might happen'. Needless to say the planning, preparation and training of an Community Emergency Team certainly paid dividends in March 2020.



Lockdown Hero Award



Lincolnshire Community Safety Award

Despite being in Sri Lanka at the time, I remotely activated the Emergency Plan and Team, then managed to get one of the last planes out. Upon my return the emergency response to cater for the needs and welfare of vulnerable residents was put into place and within a week, I had enlisted 117 volunteers, organised a Branston wide leaflet drop to 1500+ homes and set up a Food Bank. In the year since, over 2500 requests for assistance have been successfully responded to. Averaging 7 requests a day, they've included prescription collections and deliveries, shopping trips, welfare tasks, hospital escorts, a huge array of miscellaneous jobs and providing 350+ food boxes.

Community assistance and engagement, and mutual support have been my key drivers in ensuring that the best possible welfare service is provided to those not only in Branston but across 12 other surrounding communities. Establishing relationships with organisations and businesses, has also played a vital role; Lincolnshire Co-op, Morrison's, Tesco, YMCA Lincs and the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum are just a few of 35 that have been great supporters. Importantly, engaging with residents has also been pivotal and has resulted in fantastic support, without which I wouldn't have been able to achieve what I have.

On this journey, £6,300.00 of grant funding has been received, along with a number of awards as well as ten presentations on BBC Radio Lincolnshire and Lincs FM. However, this was all 'trumped' by a few seconds of fame with an appearance on BBC Breakfast.



BBC Political Reporter Alex Forsyth interviewing me on BBC Breakfast .



Seeking old Pals

Our Branch Secretary received the message to the right from Ex Spec Op John Hannam Anyone who can help John make contact with any of his muckers, please reply to John by email via the Branch Secretary who will pass on any leads:

yservices.secretary@rbl.community

From: John Hannam

Subject: Woodhouse Eaves and 2 Wireless Regiment, Cyprus

I was surprised (but very pleased!) to see several of the photos I sent to you (in 2017) are actually on your website. I had no idea that you had used them. For several years now, I've been trying to establish contact with old army friends, particularly those I served with in Cyprus, 1954-56. I was successful in re-establishing my friendship with one old "mucker", David Nobbs, as we spent our 6 months Special Wireless Ops training together at Woodhouse Eaves. David later gained international fame as a comedy writer, (he created the Reginald Perrin TV show), and author of a dozen successful books. As I'm 85 now, I realise it's getting a little late to expect to revive many (or any?) old contacts, but I felt it worth another try! **Any suggestions? John**

Sigint in World War One

Following the series of articles from academic research about Sigint in World War One, Branch member Clive Kidd thought his own offering on the same subject might be of interest to members. The article is probably more technical than the previous series and comes with some interesting illustrations.

Clive, who currently lives in Hampshire, joined the RN in 1972 and served as a Weapon Engineer Officer, leaving the Service in 2000, from an appointment to SCU Leydene. He then joined the MOD research labs at Portsmouth retiring from there in 2005. Clive is the Hon' Curator of the HMS Collingwood Heritage Collection and is a volunteer for the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth. He has been a member of the RBL since 2000.

EARTH INDUCTION TELEGRAPHY

Technical article on Sigint in WW1

Clive Kidd (Branch member, Ex Royal Navy)

Part One

Introduction

Members will be aware that the communications systems used during the First World War were subject to interception by the other side. This interception applied to wired, earth induction/current, and wireless links. This article will concentrate on the non-wireless elements; known as Telegraphie Par Sol (TPS) to the French and Americans, who also called it Ground Telegraphy. The Germans and Austrians called it Erdtelgrafie (ETEL) and the British, Earth Induction Telegraphy.

Intercepts

Intercepted TPS messages were a gift to the enemy and provided near real time intelligence of varying degrees of usefulness. Several examples of "Real life" intercepted messages are given at [1, p.32] but a single example will suffice to show the type of information that was gained. The example is an extract from a German Daily (intelligence) Summary:

"According to information received from the artillery commander of the 82nd Reserve Division, our artillery took under fire the quarry in the Malinbois (coordinates 5771) at about 13.15, January 24, 1918. The report of listening station no. 8 for January 24, 1918-13.34, shows that the fire was apparently effective. An observer called up 'Gauchard' in great excitement and called for retaliatory fire on our trenches. The voice was recognized by the listening station operator as the observer whom this listening station has frequently heard calling 'Gauchard.' On the one hand, the post of the observer was discovered, and on the other hand, the information was obtained that 'Gauchard' is the central of an artillery group."

Continued overleaf

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with the kind permission
of the editor

EARTH INDUCTION TELEGRAPHY continued

It is interesting to note that so successful was the German interception of allied traffic that the Treaty of Versailles banned its use by the German armed forces post 1919 - but not those of Austria!

The Problem and some Countermeasures

Interception of TPS signals was usually through stray earth currents. Arthur Bauer's paper [2] and the NSA document [1] give a very good introduction as to how these stray signals came about, i.e. earth leakage, or induction in the mass of wiring to be found on the front. The danger zone, for stray leakage, was eventually extended to 3000 yards from the front line. Additionally, once the problem was recognized countermeasures were introduced [3. pp106-8] to reduce the risk of interception. Such measures included;

- a. **Procedural means** - banning the use of telephones in the front line and using only coded messages rather than plain language. Unfortunately, many officers ignored this ban, despite a list of prescribed topics being promulgated [4].
- b. **System engineering techniques** – recovering unused circuits, introducing twisted pair circuits to replace single wire and earth return circuits. (Manufactured twisted pair was introduced in late 1916 but home-made twisted pair was manufactured on site before then); running all circuits at right angles to the enemy trenches and placing any earth wires alongside the cable carrying the signal; modifications to reduce power on other devices such as the Power Buzzer [5] were also initiated.
- c. **Introducing new equipment**, such as the Fullerphone, described in Keith Thrower's talk on this instrument at the DEHS November 2019 Conference on Security and Intelligence, also see [6]. The German equivalent of the Fullerphone was the "UTEL" [1 Pp3] The Americans produced a variant of the Fullerphone too, known as the Buzzerphone [7]. Incidentally, [4] states that the telephone on the Fullerphone was only for Emergency use.
- d. **Masking techniques.** A variant of the Power Buzzer was used in a vain attempt to provide a Noise Masking system and thus make the enemy's life more difficult. It was soon realized it caused as many problems for the initiator as well as the intended recipient, and the ploy was quickly discontinued.

Interception Equipment

Whilst much has been written about the consequences of the interceptions and information is freely available on the Fullerphone, very little seems to have been published on the equipment used by the intercept teams. A grainy and usually indistinct photograph may appear in a book or on an Internet site. Such photographs normally show what appears to a valve amplifier and the operator, the latter probably being the intended subject of what I assume would be an illicit photograph to give to family back home. After spending a lot of time on the internet I think I may have a better grasp of who used what and when they deployed it.

Britain

The History of the Royal Signals [3] tells us that the British intercept sets were known as IT but says very little else. However, [4, p106 onwards] gives us much more information including the fact the vulnerability of TPS sets was not recognized until 1915; credits the French with recognizing the problem; provides a lot more detail, and introduces the French 3 Valve amplifier.

Continued overleaf

EARTH INDUCTION TELEGRAPHY continued



Figure 1 Source louis-jean.sirvent

It tells us the Army introduced an Inspector of Listening Sets at GHQ, who controlled the 20 to 30 sets deployed which were also used for 'policing' allied TPS networks. It also states the German TPS circuits were far fewer and better disciplined. Whilst conducting the research for the article I wrote on the Autakym [8], I came across several papers, written just after WW1, on the work of the Signals Experimental Establishment (SEE) at Woolwich. These papers dealt with UK produced audio amplifiers and sensitive relays particularly those designed by Captain L.B.H. Turner [9]. His oscillatory valve,

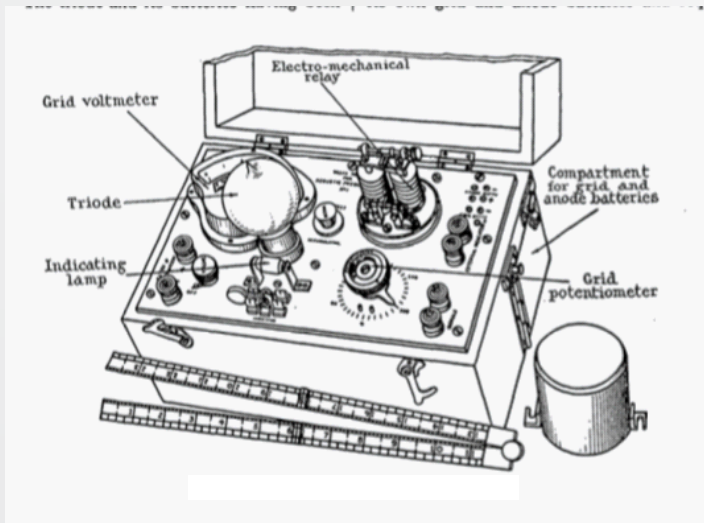


Figure 2 Source IET

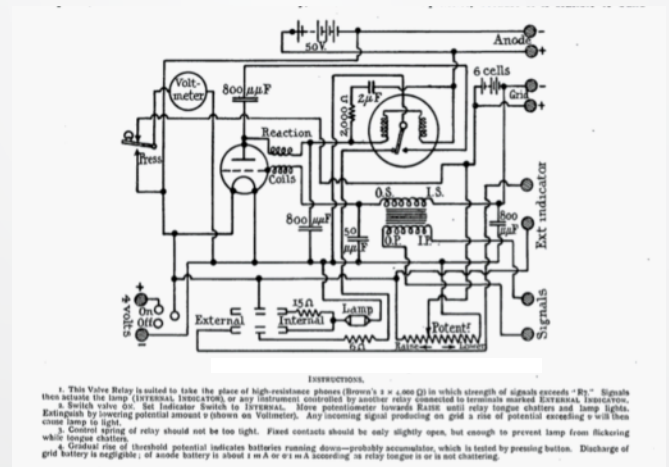


Figure 3 Source IET

Could such a sensitive device have been used for telegraphy intercept work by British Forces? In this context is the statement

"... it was designed to replace ordinary telephones used to receive Morse signals...over the wire of an ordinary buzzer field telegraph set..."

may be significant? Unfortunately, my search to validate this theory has, so far, come to a dead end. Moreover, according to US sources, the Allies used the standard French 3 valve and 5 valve amplifiers, albeit some were fitted with English made valves.

Acknowledgements and a full list of references will be included with Part Two, next month.

Part 2 of 2 next month



Poetry Corner

Our Chief Clerk at Garats Hay, Loughborough, was WO2 (ORQMS) Steve Hutchings, Royal Signals, a dedicated Wolverhampton Wanderers supporter, all-round excellent sportsman, and amusing raconteur for those who comprehend the Yam-Yam dialect. This episode occurred after another epic Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess dinner night in 1990, when a bewildered Marilyn Hutchings was wondering what had happened to her husband...

It was Greg Louganis, not Matt Biondi, (Poetic License!) who infamously almost killed himself at the 1988 Olympics when he hit his head on the diving board on his way down from ten metres..... Some of you may recognise aspects of AA Milne's Jonathan Jo...

Hutch Ado about Nothing

A lady near Quorn
one bright, early morn,
opened her back-bedroom curtain
and saw by her pool
someone acting the fool.
Was it him? She couldn't be certain.

It **was** him, no less,
just back from the mess,
telling the pond life his cares.
Informing his carp
that he'd swigged so much Harp
that Ind Coop had offered him shares.

She couldn't believe
that this was her Steve...
was he standing there flexing
his muscles?
Or with typical tact
performing an act
like that naughty wee statue in
Brussels?

Then out of the blue
he suddenly flew...
with a splash he went into the
pond, he
jack-knifed and slipped
then double-back-flipped
(though he's hardly Mark Spitz
or Matt Biondi!)

She's worried! Good grief!
What gives with the Chief?
Poor Marilyn sits down to ponder.
Has he flipped like John Cleese?
Or been brought to his knees
by that bitch of a fish they call Wanda?

Has some siren or Circe
got Steve at her mercy
down midst the pondweed and kippers?
Is he getting his share
of taboo fruits-de-mer
from some flaxen haired floosie with flippers?

Or has Jack the lad
gone stark staring mad?
Had he seen in the mirror-like waters
a face that he knew
was one of but two
of the world's only true Wolves supporters?

This being the case
was her submarine ace
now singing to drown all his troubles
the anthem of soccer
from Davey Jones' locker
"...ere we go, 'ere we go." but in
bubbles?

Through Marilyn's surmise
the bubbles still rise
some 40 or so minutes later.
When their daughters appear
she says "Don't laugh my dear...
that's not Jacques Cousteau,
it's your pater!"

Eventually, though
the chief clerk doth show
festooned with slime of all sorts,
and the maniac grin
of a bloke who's not in
or who's just found an eel in his shorts!

She says, "Right, now try
while you stand and drip dry,
to explain to us why you transgressed.
In two words, you fool,
what you did in that pool?"
He says, simply, "backstroke"
and "breast!"

For Marilyn Hutch
it's all been too much!
She's now put a stop to his larks.
She's replaced the koi,
his carp pride and joy
with morays, piranha and sharks!

Jobe Garats Hay, 1990

About John Berry, regular contributor to the Newsletter.

Joined the Intelligence Corps straight from school in 1962. After training as an Operator Int and Security at Maresfield, was shipped off to Garats Hay to train as an AN(SI). Posted to Birgelen, then Berlin. Did the Russian course at Cheltenham. Spent most of my early years in Berlin as a voice op then served in Cheltenham, Birgelen, E Troop, Celle, HQNI, Ayios Nikolaos, Falklands, Ashford, Garats Hay, Hong Kong, Bosnia, Duke of York's London and Stuttgart. Retired at the end of 37 plus years' service in December 1999. Qualified at Marjon Uni Plymouth as a teacher and spent the last 20 years teaching English. Living with Mags in Yelverton in the Dartmoor National Park. Got too old for cricket and fly fishing, so now playing golf, gardening, doing genealogy and writing daft verse.