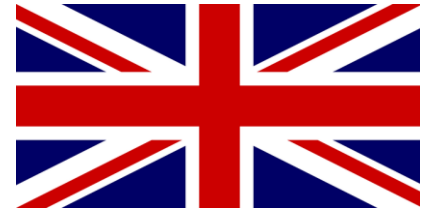




The Platinum Jubilee will soon be upon us, with celebrations planned across the country. Here in Starston, we are having a street party on the Saturday, with a (never-to-be repeated?) performance by the newly-formed village band, the Starston All-Stars, featuring, amongst many other talented village folk, Norman on spoons! John and Pearl are flying the RBL flag at events in Dickleburgh and Long Stratton to promote the branch and Bun, Cuppa and Chat, and I am sure villages and residential homes across South Norfolk will be offering their own unique events. Please do send me photographs of your celebrations.



My thanks to Jenny, Norman, Ray, Jimmy B. and Nikki for their contributions to this issue.

### **A Message from our Chairman**

I hope you are keeping well at a time when Covid seems to be on the wane but has not gone away. If any of you do test positive, I hope the symptoms are mild, and you don't have to self-isolate for long.

I note with interest from the Membership Support Officer's recent Weekly Round-up (forwarded by our secretary) that Staple Hill and District Branch put forward a motion at the National Conference requesting clarification about welfare breaks for beneficiaries now the break centres have closed, with responsibility passing to the private sector, It appears not to be happening in their area at least, so I am looking forward to the response.

We are looking forward to getting out and meeting the public during the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations, trying to recruit new members and identify service veterans who may like to join our RBL Family and perhaps come to Bun, Cuppa and Chat.

We hope to see as many of you as possible next Wednesday and Thursday.

**Best wishes, John**

### **De Lucy House Residential Care Home**

Norman and I were kindly invited by Nikki Clarke, the Activities Co-ordinator at De Lucy House in Diss, to talk to veterans at the Home and to admire the splendid progress made by the 'De Lucy Knitters' who are busy with their needles providing poppies for our expanded Poppy Cascade in Dickleburgh. If they and other volunteer knitters carry on at this rate, we should be able to line the whole parade route from the Village Centre to the war memorial!



We are hoping that several De Lucy residents will be joining us at Bun, Cuppa and Chat shortly, and we look forward to welcoming them into our Dickleburgh RBL family,

### **RBL Family News**

We are delighted to welcome Frank Thomas as a branch member. Frank served in the Royal Navy in the Second World War, enlisting when he was seventeen in 1943, although he was promptly released to the unpaid Reserve until he was eighteen, so was finally called up in August 1944. He spent much of his time in the Far East and completed his service on 29 March 1948. We hope that Frank too will be able to join us at Bun, Cuppa and Chat soon.

Simon Beet has resigned from the branch committee due to his considerable commitments with the Royal Marines Charity (the RMA) - he is currently a trustee and the South and East Regional Chairman - but he remains a branch member and Vice President and we know he is always available for help and support when asked. We thank Simon for all his work on the committee and look forward to seeing him when he is free to join us at meetings and events.

## Pink Witchcraft

by Jenny Jones of the Diss Family History Group

*In last month's Newsletter, Jenny explained how she discovered the story of her uncle, Flight Sergeant Laurence Lloyd Ruddock, who died in 1944 when his aircraft crash landed in the Bay of Bengal just off Cox's Bazar. Jenny eventually made contact with Laurie's widow, Florence, and was able to reunite her with a necklace given to her by Laurie. Florence had remarried and had passed Laurie's medals to her daughter. Although Jenny had hoped the medals might pass to her one day, she had found so much about her uncle that she was quite happy, thinking that was the end of the story. It was not.*

The catalyst was a bicycle, not just any bicycle though, it was the iconic pink and turquoise Raleigh Pink Witch, manufactured in 1958 and the must-have bike for teenage girls. My parents saved for months in a club at the local cycle shop so that I could have it for Christmas when I was twelve and a half. Fast forward to 2020. I belong to the Dartford Remembered group on Facebook and in April that year, I posted a question asking if any Dartford girls had owned a Pink Witch. I'd forgotten all about it, so was surprised when months later I got a reply from a man named Alan who showed the post to his wife, Lynette, as she had desperately wanted that bicycle.

Then Lynette herself replied and this is where the story gets weird. Was I a friend of her mother, known as June? How odd. I sent my phone number via Messenger and she rang immediately. Lynette was Florence's daughter. She had seen Laurie's picture among my photos and to say she was emotionally affected doesn't really cut it. She had lived with her mother's grief and Laurie's absence since she was a child. But who was this June?

After Florence's death, a woman named June had contacted Lynette, saying she was an old friend of Florence. June was a frequent visitor for a while and led Lynette to believe that she was a member of my family, thus related to Laurie, and that it was she who had done the research back in the 1990s. She was so believable that Lynette gave her Laurie's medals. June said she would pass them on, together with the telegram, to her daughter Vanda "who was in the military herself and would treasure them." As Lynette and Alan had no children, they thought it was the right thing to do. When I convinced Lynette that June was nothing to do with me or my family, she was understandably distraught. I was amazed that someone had seized an opportunity to virtually impersonate me.

There were some positives though. I had learned that this June had an unusual maiden name and her daughter's name was Vanda, also unusual. Thank goodness for Ancestry and Facebook. In ten minutes, I had found June's marriage, her daughter's birth, and a marriage for Vanda to a Douglas Brown. A search on Facebook revealed a Vanda Brown as manager of a military pre-school in the Midlands. I have tweaked the names a little as I am talking about living people, but the rarity is a fact. I reported back to Lynette who telephoned the school and spoke to a surprised Vanda who explained that June had been a "narcissist and a liar" so nothing would surprise her. June had died some years before, but Vanda still had some unopened boxes from her mother's house in her loft. She would look when we got home. That evening Lynette rang. Vanda had found the medals and the telegram. She was planning to visit Kent this year so would meet up with Lynette and give them to her. Lynette was adamant that I should have them so we will drive down and collect them when the time comes. Laurie's medals are coming home to his family after 77 years.

Even now I cannot believe it. I have said more than once that it seemed as if the tectonic plates of synchronicity had shifted for a brief moment in time and a window opened. Lynette's husband had only been on Facebook for three weeks when he saw my post. If I'd had a Raleigh Ladies Clubman or Vanda had been called Susan, it would not have happened.



## The Dickleburgh Fallen by Rosemary Steer

This month, I am focusing on five men from the village who enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment early in the First World War - William Bullingham, Samuel Chilvers, Albert Hubbard, Frederick Noble and Albert Ray, as well as Jack Hubbard, Albert's brother, who joined the Norfolk Regiment. Some of these names may be familiar to Dickleburgh people as their relatives have recently been or still are, members of our RBL family.



L to R: Albert (Wag) Hubbard, Unknown, Sid Limmer, Sam Chilvers, Ernest 'Numshi' Bullock, Fred Chilvers, Unknown, William 'Duke' Bullingham, Fred Noble, Jack Bullock, Unknown

Possibly also pictured: Albert Ray, Jesse Hoskins (from Fersfield), Ernest Steggall

This photograph was taken at Burston station, possibly as the men set off for their journey to France in 1915.

William 'Duke' Bullingham was born in Dickleburgh in 1892, the son of Lucy and Robert Bullingham, a cattle drover. He was killed on 1 July 1916 and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial as his body was not found. His brothers Henry/Harry and Robert also served but survived the War.

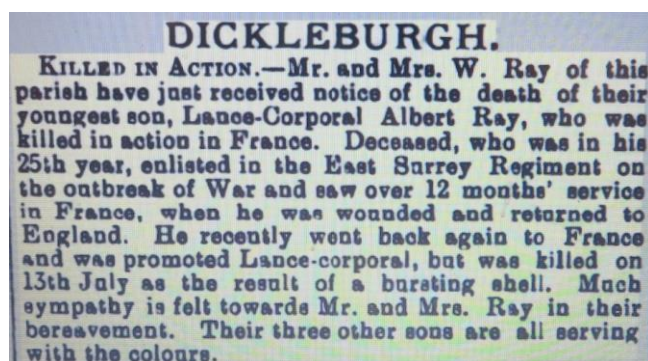
Fred Noble was also killed on 1 July 1916 although, unlike William Bullingham, his body was recovered and he was buried in the Dantzig Alley British Cemetery, Mametz. Born in 1889, in Coddendam, Suffolk, the son of Mary Ann and John Noble, Fred was living as a boarder in Dickleburgh in the household of Frederick Chenery in 1911.

Albert Hubbard (Ray Hubbard's uncle) died of wounds on 10 November 1916 and was buried in the Contay British Cemetery. By the time of his death, Albert was married with three children, one of whom is pictured in his arms in the above photograph, probably his oldest child, Clara. His brother Jack enlisted in the Norfolk Regiment on 12 November 1914, and later transferred to the 7th Battalion, Border Regiment He was killed in action on 13 October 1917 and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot memorial near Ypres. Two other Hubbard brothers, Robert and William, survived the War.

Sam Chilvers was born in Dickleburgh in 1891, the son of Emily and Harry Chilvers, agricultural labourer. The family had lived in Dickleburgh since at least the early part of the nineteenth century. Sam achieved the rank of corporal. He died of wounds on 25 September 1916 and was buried in Puchevillers British Cemetery. His father Harry and brother Frederick (Aubrey's father) both served in the War but survived.



Jack Hubbard



Albert Ray was born in Dickleburgh in 1891, the son of Harriet & William Ray, carpenter. He was killed on 13 July 1917 in Flanders and is buried at Perth Cemetery (China Wall) near Ypres. Albert's three brothers, Frederick, James and Walter, served with other units and survived the War.

Two of the ten Dickleburgh men who joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment in September 1914 were demobbed in March 1919 and the three others were awarded the Silver War Badge and discharged before the end of the War because of shell shock or wounds. A high casualty rate.

## Norman's Chuckle Corner

- ✚ A chef got very angry at his new assistant. He yelled at him, "Didn't I tell you to notice when the soup boiled over?" "I did", said the assistant, "It was half past eleven,"
- ✚ "Waiter! What's this?" "It's bean soup, Sir." "I don't care what it's been. What is it now?"
- ✚ "Waiter! what's this fly doing in my soup?" "Looks like the backstroke, Sir."
- ✚ "Waiter! This lobster has only got one claw?" "He must have been in a fight, Sir." "Well, bring me the winner!"
- ✚ A man and a woman were sitting in a restaurant when the waitress noticed the man sliding down his chair and under the table. The woman appeared remarkably unconcerned, but the waitress thought she ought to say something, "Excuse me madam" she said, "I think your husband just slid under the table." "No", replied the woman coldly, "He has just walked through the door."
- ✚ A teacher struggling to teach one of her young pupils rithmetic decided to get him to understand by telling him a story. "If you reached into your right pocket and found a pound coin, and you reached into your left pocket and found another pound coin what would you have?" The boy thought for a moment and then joyfully answered, "Someone else's trousers."
- ✚ A puny bus driver pulled up at a stop and a giant of a man climbed on board. "Big John doesn't pay," the man said, sitting down, and the driver did not argue. The next day the same thing happened as the man mountain got on board, "Big John doesn't pay" and went and sat down. The driver started to resent the man's attitude, so he decided to go to the gym and work out on an intensive course of body building so that he could stand up to this giant of a man. Three weeks later, his muscles tight and rippling where before there was skin and bone, the driver was looking forward to standing up to the giant when he got on the bus. At the first stop, the big man was there and as he boarded the bus, announced, "Big John doesn't pay." The driver, thinking that's enough, got out of his seat and said, "Oh yeah and why doesn't Big John have to pay," with hands on his hips. The man reached into his pocket. The driver began to fear the worst and stood to his full height, expanding his chest. The man said, "Because Big John got a bus pass."

**Contributions or comments, please, to the Editor, Rosemary Steer, tel.: 01379 854245; email: [rosemary@steerfamily.plus.com](mailto:rosemary@steerfamily.plus.com)**

## Dates for your diary

*Please note the new time for branch meetings and the new venue and day for Bun, Cuppa and Chat*

### Branch meetings

Wednesday 25 May and Wednesday 22 June, 7.30pm, Village Centre

### Bun, Cuppa and Chat

Thursday 26 May and Thursday 23 June, 2.30-4pm, Village Centre

**Diss Branch Open Meeting**, Monday 20 June, 2pm, Diss and District Bowls Club, Lower Denmark Street, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 4BE, with a talk by Terry Pegg from Harleston RBL about the World War 1 tablecloth that was discovered in Harleston. Refreshments available. Everyone welcome.

### Simonds Coach Trip to the National Arboretum

25 September 2022, £36, Contact Simonds directly: to book: [https://www.simonds.co.uk/home\\_or\\_01379\\_647300](https://www.simonds.co.uk/home_or_01379_647300)

**Our branch will be celebrating its centenary in January 2023, so we are planning various events including a Festival of Remembrance and a concert. More information to follow!**

### Helping our Local Veterans

We offer support to local service veterans, their spouses, and widowers/widows of veterans mainly through our Bun, Cuppa and Chat group which meets monthly at the Dickleburgh Village Centre. Members of the group also receive a regular call from our Branch Community Support team (usually Norman or John) to check all is well, and of course, receive this Newsletter.

Norman has contacts with several other armed forces charities and local agencies who may provide further help to our local veterans and several of these have spoken about their services at Bun, Cuppa and Chat. We are constantly updating our contacts and looking at ways we can further support the armed forces community locally.

If you need help or guidance, please contact Revd Norman Steer in the first instance (01379 854245). If he cannot help himself, he will try to find someone who can!

**NB - Following the recent talk by Malcolm Stelfox from SSAFA, we have been asked to pass on their local contact number – 01603 403322**

*If you have received this Newsletter, but are not involved with the Royal British Legion, don't worry, we just wanted to spread a little fun and humour around! Please contact me, though, if you would like your name removed from the mailing list.*