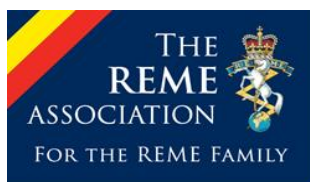




BUMPER CHRISTMAS EDITION





PRESIDENTS WELCOME

Welcome to you all. Firstly, I must put out a massive thank you to one of our members for his enormous generosity. Stuart McIntyre (pictured) offered to cover the cost of printing the 2025 calendar. This was no small amount as it ran into the hundreds of pounds to produce our 60 calendars. Stuart's generosity shows us all that the esprit de corps we are all so proud of and as a trade, famous for is alive and well in our branch. I'm sure the whole membership will join me in thanking Stuart for this outstanding gesture.



This is the end of another successful year for our branch. It has seen the membership grow to over 650, we have had a spread of Veterans, Reservists, Family and Honorary members join and happily the new cohort includes quite a few serving members so a special welcome to them and all our newbies. It is especially important to grow the branch with our current crop of Recy Mechs as they are the future of not only the branch but our beloved trade. With this influx of new blood, I would encourage all of you to engage with the branch. The committee, whilst doing a sterling job do not have the licence on ideas, good or bad. We still need your input, your ideas and if you can spare it a little of your time. I'm not asking you to volunteer for the committee, although all volunteers are most welcome. No, I'm asking you to support your branch by attending our annual functions. As you know we organise an annual Bow Shackle Ball, which in 2025 will be held in the Derby area. We also arrange a cultural trip, last year we visited the battlefields of the Somme, next year we are looking at visiting Auschwitz. We are also trying to arrange a new annual feature called "Winch to the Wall". This will give members the chance to visit Lyneham and see the Recovery Mechanics wall of remembrance, REME museum and maybe an opportunity for a night out with fellow members. All these events are open to all members and will be advertised throughout the year on our media platforms. So, the rewards for giving your time are varied and at least one event should appeal to you all.

Next year will see the launch of our new website, where you will be able to catch all the latest branch and association news, the latest updates on upcoming events, upload your pictures and stories to share with the branch membership. It will give you information on welfare issues and where to seek help, obituaries and funeral details and have a blog page so you can tell us what you think and share your ideas with everyone. It will also be home to our shop, you will be able to buy branch merchandise and book and pay for events. Once the build is complete it will be handed over to Josh Fox who has volunteered to be our IT manager (God knows we need one). Josh will also be looking after our Facebook page. Josh is a serving Sergeant and is giving up his time to ensure that the branch members have the very best communications and media platforms we can give them, many thanks Josh, your selfless commitment and dedication to the trade shows the very best of Recovery Mechanics.

Finally, from me, I'll take this opportunity to wish you all the very best Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing more of you at our functions in 2025.

Arte et Marte.
Cheers

John





OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC



I first met Paddy Bryars in Bordon, 1978, he was a couple of courses behind me in our basic trade training, my memory is a bit jaded from that time (too much cider in the Tangerine club). Fast forward to 1989 and we had a brief reunion on Rock Steady, by which time he was sergeant - safe to say I think he enjoyed his time at 4 Armd., he often referred to it. We then both served with 16/5 Lancers at Wimbish, where his talents as a section head shone through, often reminding me that he was the best boss I ever had".

From then on, we kept in touch regularly, as Paddy transitioned into the NRPS role with the TA in Preston. Paddy really settled into life in Preston, he had made many friends in the TA, and he attended various reunions always looking forward to meeting up with his friends for a drink and reminisce about past exploits. He got into motorcycling more with the odd tour to Germany, Ireland and all over the UK, they were great times, and we had some great laughs.

In 2021 Paddy finally left the Army, he bought a lovely bungalow in a village just outside Preston, he had a part time job at a local Toolstation - always handy for supplementing the crows foot spanners in his shed! When I say shed, it wasn't much smaller than the house!

Sadly, Paddy was taken from us in August this year, at the age of 63, so not much time to enjoy the fruits of his labour.

Paddy didn't wear his heart on his sleeve, even when he was diagnosed, he wanted it kept to a close circle of friends. I don't think he realised how much friends and colleagues thought of him and how he'll be missed by them and particularly by his brother Stephen.

RIP Old Friend – **Russ Kettlewell.**

COMMITTEE NEWS

Lots has happened since the issue of the last newsletter, we have had the Branch annual Bow Shackle Ball, been on the Branch Overseas Trip, attended the REME Memorial Day at the Arboretum, attended a Remembrance Day Parade in Ilkeston and of course our Annual General Meeting which was held on the morning of the BSB at Lutterworth, you can read about all those activities within the pages of this issue of your Newsletter.

The AGM was attended by a record number of Members and Honorary Members totalling 17, a testament to the successes we are achieving as a Branch. We did, as normal, have a link set up via Google Meet to allow members who could not attend in person to join in. Unfortunately, the link was not used by any of the membership which is a little bit of a disappointment as it is your Branch and it would have been good to have had some views and thoughts from outside the committee, not to worry, there is always next year.

Outcomes from the AGM see the committee remain with the same personnel as throughout this year with the addition of two volunteers, Josh Fox and Nick Williams who are both serving members, Josh will be looking after the Branch IT and Facebook matters, as





previously stated in the Welcome by the President, whilst Nick was involved with promoting merchandise within the ranks of serving members.

FORTH COMING EVENTS

The Branch Overseas Trip for 2025 will be to Poland, provisionally the dates will be over the period **16 – 19 May 2025**, with the main attraction being Auschwitz-Birkenau. Details are still being finalised, so keep an eye open for this event appearing through the Branch Media channels.

The Bow Shackle Ball 2025 will be held at the Mickleover Hotel, near Derby on the **4 October 2025**, see below for further details. Those of you who have never experienced a BSB should really consider doing so, a great night is always on the cards.



REME Association

RECOVERY MECHANICS BRANCH

BOW SHACKLE BALL

Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th October 2025

staying at the **Derby Mickleover Hotel, Etwall Road,**
Mickleover, Derby, DE3 0XX

YOUR WEEKEND PACKAGE INCLUDES:

Bed & Breakfast. From 15:00hrs Friday 3rd October 2025 for a good old chinwag, pull up a sandbag and swing the lamps and drink till the early hours. Saturday 4th October 2025, afternoon AGM. Saturday evening 4th October 2025, Gala dinner with Raffle...Auction...Disco.

2 Night Package Double Room and Gala dinner	£323 per couple
1 Night Package Double Room and Gala dinner	£214 per couple
2 Night Package Single Room and Gala dinner	£253 per person
1 Night Package Single Room and Gala dinner	£135 per person
Gala dinner only	£50 per person

DEPOSIT: A non-refundable Deposit of £25 per person is required at the time of booking to attending the Bow Shackle Ball.

PAYMENT: Full Payment is due by 10th August 2025, staged payments accepted before this date, contact us for more details.

Pay Direct into our Bank: Lloyds Bank, Recy Mech Branch, Sort Code: 30-99-50, Account Number: 84352668 Please use BSB25 as the payment reference.

All enquiries email: Chris Zeil
treasurer.recymechbranch@gmail.com





Keep your eyes peeled for “Winch To The Wall” information.

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

Recovery Mechanics Branch AGM **4 October 2025** at the Mickleover Hotel, near Derby.

HAS ANYBODY SEEN...

This section of the Newsletter is included in each Edition. The idea being that membership who wish to attempt to contact Recovery Mechanics of yesteryear can appeal through the Newsletter for assistance. Just let us know through the pages of our Facebook Account or email the branch email address, recymechbranch@gmail.com who you are trying to trace, and we will include it in the Newsletter and hopefully someone can help you in your search.

Surprisingly, this facility has yet to be used, whilst there have been a couple of requests for contacts on the Branch Facebook page, nothing yet through the Newsletter. The Branch has details of all members, and should you be looking for someone, we can help, for obvious reasons we cannot hand out details without prior permission of any individual you may be seeking to reunite with.

MEMBERSHIP SUBMISSIONS

THE BOW SHACKLE BALL



Another successful Branch AGM and Bow Shackle Ball took place at Best Western Plus Ullesthorpe Court Hotel & Golf Club, on 28 Sep 2024. The AGM held in the afternoon and well attended in person, using the excellent facilities it was also available online to members could make it on the day. It was a fruitful meeting with great future decisions made including, Winch to the wall, The Recy Mech Branch Remembrance Parade that will take place on Sunday 10th November 2024 in Ilkeston, to name a few.

During this time the hotel leisure facilities were open and on offer to guests and partners and were well used.

The Ball itself took place in the hotels function room which had its own bar and room for a dance floor, to dance off the calories from what was a delicious meal. The meal was opened by a few words from the Branch Chairman, after the meal we toasted the King, Duchess of Edinburgh and absent friends, in particular Cpl Spud Taylor who was lost in action twenty years exactly to the day, a poignant moment. There were then a few words from the





Branch President. Who handed over to our guest of honour 'Roger Hall' who is a current resident of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. He gave an interesting insight to life into such a prestigious location, interesting fact was that due to the care, facilities offered and activity, that their life expectation is in general extended by 10 over the national norm.

Also present at the ball was the young lady in the photograph that some of

you may recognise, and remember her from the days of the pandemic, she is May Parsons, who administered the first ever COVID 19 vaccine. May represented NHS England in receiving the George Cross Medal from the late Queen Elizabeth, May is seen in the photograph proudly wearing the medal.



The raffle was a silent one this year to allow more partying to be done, the raffle and auction raised **£1096.52** to continue to support the branch. Thanks goes out to all those who donated items for raffle or auction. I would like to thank my wife who crocheted a bear in patches representing poppies, After the guest of honour speech and inspiring talk, the consensus was to destroy some more brain cells and generally party on into the early hours...

Special thanks go out to the committee, the staff who worked hard to make it a great event.

Submitted by Stuart Martin

REMEMBERANCE DAY 2024



The Recovery Mechanics Branch have once again proven to be true pioneers with the cutting edge when it comes to Remembrance and Respecting those who are ever remembered, forever missed, and gave their tomorrow for our today. Going back to the early days when a group of Recovery Mechanics formed a Branch within the Royal British Legion and subsequently the Recovery Mechanics Branch of REME Association it has always been an honour and a pleasure to go to London and parade on the great Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph and we will in the future as a Branch return to London. This year it was decided that the Branch would attempt to do something different For some years it had been talked about possibly making a visit to the home town of a fallen, lost in action, fellow Recovery Mechanic, where with family permissions, we could take the Branch Act of Remembrance a stage further and additional to the normal Act of Remembrance by



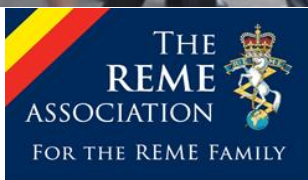


marching and respecting of those who laid down their lives during conflict with the 2 minute silence.

Lance Corporal Kevin “Dinger” Bell, Recovery Mechanic, aged 28 years old, died while serving with peace-keeping forces in Banja Luka, Bosnia Herzegovina on 11 June 1998. Kevin from Ilkeston, Derbyshire as a youngster had joined the Army Cadets and always wanted to be a soldier. At the age of 20 he signed up and joined REME and completed all the necessary training and testing to become one of the coveted Recovery Mechanics. On the 11th of June 1998, Kevin was driving a van towing a trailer along a road near Banja Luka when he had to swerve to avoid an oncoming car. His van left the road and went down an embankment, Kevin was fatally injured.

On Sunday 10th of November, we got our wish, we met up in Ilkeston to commemorate and pay our respects to the brave men and woman who sacrificed so much for our freedom followed by a very personal Act of Remembrance engaging with the Bell Family and friends and visited the resting place of our very own Dinger Bell.

Arrangements to carry out this Act of Remembrance had been in the Branch’s planning for some time and thanks to the efforts of Glen Conroy and Bob Fullbrook we as a Branch pulled off yet another first. Arrangements had been made that we could attend and march along with the Ilkeston Branch of the Royal British Legion in the Ilkeston Remembrance Parade. During the march the Bell Family were within our ranks, plus wives and partners of Branch Members, yet another first for the Recovery Mechanics Branch, and when it came to





wreath laying Mr. Bell and his daughter laid a wreath provided by and on behalf of the Recovery Mechanics Branch

Upon completion of all parade activities the Bell family, friends and 16 members of the Recovery Mechanics Branch gathered together and made their way to the resting place of Kevin "Dinger" Bell, where a poem, written shortly after Kevins passing was read out by Mark O'Mahony, a further wreath was laid at Kevins grave by Mr. Bell on behalf of the Bell family, friends and the Recovery Mechanics Branch. Photographs, kindly provided by Ian MacDonald, thanks Ian, show some of the activities.





When all the activities were complete all retired to a lovely little refreshment outlet named the Staton Cask where we were welcomed with open arms and really looked after, (just like we had been on the night before) The proprietor, also a veteran, (someone had to be in the Royal Signals) really did go the extra mile to ensure that all thoroughly enjoyed themselves, a big thank you to him and all his staff for their excellent contribution to yet another very successful weekend for the Recovery Mechanics Branch.



A huge thank you goes out to all who were involved in organizing the event, the Bell Family for their kind permission to hold such an event, and to all those members who had travelled, so proudly polished up their medals, shoes, brushed the berets and wearing Recovery Mechanics Veteran uniform of blazer, Branch tie and flannels. Equally, thank you to the wives and partners who for the first time marched within our ranks on a Remembrance Day parade.



And the winner of the singing and dancing competition was of course none other than the very popular Roland Sam Oakley

Submitted by - BC





RECOVERY TRAINING WING REMEMBERS

The Recovery Training Wing at Lyneham made their annual pilgrimage to the Recovery Mechanics Memorial Wall located outside the Training Wings buildings on Monday 11th November to pay their respects to those Recovery Mechanics who are no longer with us and of course to the much wider field who gave the ultimate sacrifice by observing the 2-minute silence at 11 AM in front of the Memorial Wall.



Submitted by Joe Williams



LET'S GET THIS YOUNG LADY TO HER DESTINATION

The Branch received the message below about the daughter, Georgia of the late Mark Wilson, a Recovery Mechanic. Georgia is hoping to do something special in 2026, please read what she has to say about her forthcoming adventure. The Branch has donated £100 to Georgia for this great initiative, and we hope she reaches her target, we wish her well. Also below is the link that you would require should you personally wish to donate, just type into address bar.

For the few who don't know **Mark Wilson** was a recovery mechanic who left this world too early leaving behind a young family.

As a trade we have tried to continue to support them but I'll be first to admit I could do better.

His daughter is trying to raise money for a once in a life time school trip.

See the link below. Spare some chance if you can. 🇬🇧 🇪🇺 🇬🇧

****My daughters Fundraiser for Ecuador****
Read about her journey to Ecuador with camps international and her school to help communities and deforestation on the link below! Any donations will be very very much appreciated and greatfully received.
Please share the link with as many people you can, including social media, family and friends.
Thank you!

Hi, my name is Georgia. I am fundraising to go to Ecuador in summer 2026, when i am 16, with my school and camps international. This opportunity is to help develop the less fortunate and poorer communities by building homes, medical centres and schools. Another thing we are doing is planting trees to help with deforestation. Unfortunately, though I do not have enough money to do so I am trying to raise as much as I can for the amazing opportunity i have ahead of me. To help secure my place I will be fundraising alongside this including baking sales, sponsored swims and runs and any other opportunities I can get a hold of. This does mean I only have 18 months to raise the £5050 so any donations or sharing of this page would be extremely appreciated.
Thank you!

https://www.gofundme.com/f/fundraiser-for-ecuador?attribution_id=sl:5a5537c1-1051-4d6a-9590-320b6fa1a056&utm_campaign=natman_sharesheet_dash&utm_content=natman_amp1c&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=copy_link

Further advancement for the Recovery Mechanic Trade

A great military leader once said - "I love it when a plan comes together" *John "Hannibal" Smith.*

Today was the fruition of nearly 2 years work cumulating in the [Society of Operations Engineers](#) auditing the [Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers - REME](#) Recovery Mechanic trade at work in DSEME at the Recovery training wing (RTW).

A resounding success with the trade showcasing itself higher than could be imaginable and cementing a path to EngTech (and beyond) clear into the future.
Some "T"s to cross and "I"s to dot, but a win all round. A great day for the trade and wider REME! Thank you to [John Voss](#), [Ian MacDonald](#) and [Robin Bates MSOE MBES](#) for their





time and efforts.



Submitted by Joe Williams

OVERSEAS TRIP TO THE SOMME



Following the Ypres overseas trip in September 23 it was decided to organise another similar trip during September 24 and so the branch visited the Somme 13-15 September. The format of the weekend followed that of the Ypres trip, meeting the Thursday evening at a hotel in Ashford, a few ales and food, departing on the Friday morning after parking up our cars at the Reservist Centre in Ashford, (thanks to the persuasive powers of Chris Vaughan) we travelled by executive bus to the Le Shuttle and the Somme, returning to Ashford the Sunday evening.



There were 22 members including family attended, it also included some Ypres veterans and a new members 17yr old daughter and of course our expert WW1 tour guide Mr Barry Kitchener BEM, who using his characteristic charm and wit brought each of the itinerary stops to life, (thank God not literally, but you know what I mean). Barry is seen in the photograph leading the group and checking his facts.



The itinerary included stops on the Friday at the Devonshire Trenches, Welsh Memorial and Flatiron Copse, before reaching our hotel accommodation in Amiens and a well-deserved drink or four... On the Saturday, the trip took us to Beaumont Hamel, the Ulster Tower, the Thiepval Memorial, where flowers were laid in an Act of Remembrance, and Vimy Ridge on the Sunday as we headed back to Le Shuttle, this was also on last year's itinerary. Vimy Ridge, if you ever pass that way is well worth a visit, spectacular...

If you were not aware, on the attendance declaration form we ask for any information you might have about a family member who was either KIA or missing, the intent here to research this individual's service history to try discovering how they met their demises. This research was done by our guide Barry in his own time who then would use the story as a way of explaining the level of sacrifice and horror faced daily... bringing a story to life in an unexpected way.



Last year it was TC Mands who was the last to declare his intent to attend and the only one in the group with a relative KIA. This year we were fortunate again with John and Susan Hodson who declared they had a relative posted as 'missing'. His name is on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing. Well Barry armed with his Regt and Number did his research and was able to pinpoint the area he went missing. He told the story of John and Susans relation using a fictional Regiment and names, and then surprising the entire group at the end of his story by revealing the true identity of who he had been describing, bringing Susan to tears and others close to it, when he stated that it wasn't the fictional unit he was using to tell the tale, but Susan's 'missing' relative, s Company... and that her relative was still out there somewhere in the field we were looking into... I suppose you had to



be there, but it really did bring the enormity of the sacrifice home and make that part of the trip very, very personal...



The Saturday ended early enough to freshen up and go for a group meal and enjoy the very pleasant hospitality and local attractions of Amiens, this was a private dining room of a local Indian restaurant, then to our own devices, I particularly enjoyed the Cathedral Notre-Dame d' Amiens laser light show with beers and more shenanigans at the bars along the River Somme until my body reminded me, I am a long way past 30!

Next year 16-19 May 2025, we are organising a trip to Krakow, the outline itinerary, including guides, will be something like, Friday meet at Krakow airport, drop bags at hotel visit the Salt Mines, Saturday Oscar Shindler Factory, Saturday private guided tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sun depart Krakow... we will be posting a Facebook event asking those who want to attend to commit with a small deposit. Timescales to commit and cutoff date will, due to the amount of planning required be fairly short so keep an eye out if this interests you.

Submitted by Mark O'Mahony

REME MEMORIAL DAY – ARBORETUM

On the 26 September 2024 REME held its annual Memorial Day at the National Memorial Arboretum, there was a very good attendance of around 370 people which included members of the Recovery Mechanics Branch. The Corp Colonel gave a highly informative speech and Corp Padre carried out a short service.

The Branch also had its Standard on, what turned out to be a unique parade, proudly carried by Chris Zeil. On parade and marching to a band were 15 Standard Bearers representing





various REME Branches of the Association. What was unique about the parade was that one third of the Standard Bearers were Recovery Mechanic Veterans, yes 5 Recy Mech Standard Bearers. Even more unique than that, they were all in step!! It was an immensely proud moment, and a tiny bit emotional.

The photograph below shows 3 of the five, check out the step, who would have ever thought that Chris Zeil, Steve Robertshaw and Chris Vaughan kept in step throughout the whole parade – well done to them all, you done the Corp and the Branch proud.





NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION



ANYONE REQUIRING ASSISTANCE – USEFUL CONTACTS

Assistance for the Branch Membership will always be close at hand, we are all in this together, and here to help. In the event of any member experiencing difficult times, they must not hesitate to contact the branch. If we as a group cannot assist with a situation, we certainly know where help may be available.



01302347866
Relate



08002606767
SSAFA Forces Line



08001381619
Combat Stress Military Helpline



TEXT 24/7
The Shout Text Service



08088084000
National Debtline



Alcohols Anonymous
Great Britain
08009177650
Alcohols Anonymous



03300940322
Gamblers Anonymous



08088010327
Men's Advice Line
Domestic Violence



01482421525
Eating Disorder Support



Alcohol Awareness
4-AlphaArmy@gmail.com



03001236600
Talk to Frank



08088001677
Cruse Bereavement Support



0808 802 8080



Samaritans 116 123



Royal Albert Hall

Service of Remembrance
(R Albert Hall)
festivalofremembrance.
seetickets.com
02070877929



01904882053
Army Welfare Service



remeconnect.org
01249 894507



REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch
recymechbranch@gmail.com



WOY@REMECharity.org
association@remecharity.org
07590 848766





AND FINALLY

As we draw to the close of another year, I can safely say that the Branch has had a very successful year, growing from strength to strength, and the membership numbers still increasing, almost daily. It has been particularly noticeable the increase in numbers of membership in the category of Serving Recovery Mechanics, great to have the future of the trade on board and taking an interest in what the Branch are continually achieving, this influx is mainly down to the efforts of WO1 (ASM) Joe Williams and his team at the Recovery Training Wing, which reminds me, congratulations to Joe on having been selected for commission, well done Joe.

Financially the Branch is healthy and will continue to give support to chosen charities as and when we can, whilst we are not in the market to make lots of revenue, we hope to further improve profitability when the Branch Website gets launched and becomes live, real soon, and then we will have a drive with Recovery Mechanic Merchandise. You will be able to go directly to the Branch Shop, select what you want, pay online and the item will post directly to you. Another very successful line has been the Branch Calendar, it has proved to be very popular, so much so that extra copies had to be ordered this year, fantastic work and great efforts from the Branch President John Sibley.

An interesting fact, did you know that the largest proportion of the Branch Membership, regionally, reside between East and West Midlands, which rather surprised us that we did not see more members at the BSB at Lutterworth, so this year the BSB being in the Derby area we hope that we can attract a few more members to attend, the Derby area is very easily reached from lots of places, so put the date in your diary now and get booked up for an experience that you will never forget. As our President has already expressed in his opening Welcome Message, please, if it is possible, support your Branch.

Well, time for me to be signing off for 2024 Newsletters, we hope that you enjoy receiving and reading the Branch updates on what is going on in the Recovery World, I would like to personally and on behalf of the Branch Committee, thank you for your support and wish you all a very joyous Christmas and prosperous 2025. I am sure also at this time of year there are many who's thoughts go to absent family and friends. Peace be with them.

And Finally, thank you to the Committee Members who make it all happen, without them we would not have anything to write about, they are dedicated and give up their free time to ensuring that there is always something on the go for you, the members. We are also fortunate to have a President who commits so much time and effort to everything that we do, way beyond what you would reasonably expect, thanks John.

SLAINTE MHATH



BC

