



NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER
EDITION 15
MARCH 2025



HEADLINES

Welcome all to the first Newsletter of 2025, Newsletter Edition 15.

The Branch marches on, getting stronger all the time. Membership is increasing and we are seeing more and more younger members of the trade joining the branch. It has always been our ambition to grow the younger membership as they represent the future of the branch. I'd like to welcome all new members but especially our younger serving people, you are all very welcome and I'd encourage you to not be shy in coming forward with any ideas you may have for the good and benefit of the branch, it's your branch after all.

Financially the Branch is sound with most of our revenue being collected from the Bow Shackle Ball each year and a very small profit from the Branch Merchandise. An area that we hope to improve going forward by making more items available for purchase, allowing the membership to enjoy the unique clothing items that will be produced. As a Branch we have also received donations from some members – we do ok considering that there are no joining or annual fees involved in becoming a Branch Member. If you haven't learned already, imminently we shall be launching our own website, when fully functioning you will be able to purchase online. You will be invited to join the website, please do so, as it will also attract a discount on all merchandise.

As a committee we are always on the lookout for new ventures and new ideas. During my employment after service life, I would often sit in a room with senior company members who would come up with many ambitious solutions to solve issues. In many cases they had no idea of what the problem entailed. My solution to these issues, was "let's ask the people who do the work". In most cases the solution was found. The point I am trying to make is simply that you, the membership may well have ideas that could further enhance the profile of the Recovery Mechanics Branch, if so please tell us about them, we will always look at any constructive ideas. Should you have something that you wish to put forward, please send it to the Branch email address at:

recymechbranch@gmail.com

You may well find this edition is somewhat light in comparison with previous editions and you can find out more about the reasons why as you read through these pages. Regardless, of what we have or do not have, we are now well into 2025, and I hope that all of you are finding life being good to you and that your goals and ambitions become reality throughout the year.

Enjoy the content.

Stay Safe

BC



OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

During the period since the last Newsletter, Edition 14, December 2024, the Branch received notification of the passing of 3 Veteran Recovery Mechanics:

Evan (Big Van) Carter

Rod Pettifor

Steve Cope

I personally knew Van Carter who during his time in service was one of the characters of the Recovery World and very much a family man and contributing lots to his local community. Van's funeral was very well attended. Of course, by his family and friends, but also by Branch Members, with the Branch Standard and many other Veterans from varying Services and Regiments.

Each time the Branch learns of a fellow Recovery Mechanic passing it attempts to contact the family and offer condolences from the Branch and offer any assistance that we can. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to make a connection, this can be for various reasons, some families prefer to have privacy at such times, sometimes we just don't have the means to make contact, and, on some occasions, we learn too late to be able to offer any assistance. As a Branch we do really rely lots on you the membership, should you know of the passing of a Recovery Mechanic, (Serving, Reservist or Veteran) or are in contact with a family of a very recent lost colleague, we ask that you bring it to the Branch's attention as quickly as possible, this may allow us to offer condolences and any assistance that a family may desire.

From the 3 names above, it has only been possible to write a very short passage about 1. The aim of the Branch is to have a eulogy published within the Newsletter for each lost colleague, generally there is someone out there who has served with or has known an individual who has passed, but as much as we, the Humble Recovery Mechanic, never afraid to give an opinion, when it comes to writing a eulogy, for some reason we appear to become very shy. Again, as a Branch, we do rely on you the membership and respectfully request that if you did know someone that passed, please consider writing a small eulogy and submit it for publication in the Branch Newsletter. Please, if you hear of a Recovery Mechanic passing or can write a small eulogy on someone who has passed, make contact using the Branch email:

recymechbranch@gmail.com

It is also very important to learn about the passing of any Recovery Mechanic as this also allows us to put forward that name for inclusion on the Memorial Wall at Lyneham.



COMMITTEE NEWS

As you can imagine things have been reasonably quiet over the last 3 months, getting back to normal after all the Christmas and New Year festivities. The Committee have still been busy with the monthly meetings and started the planning for next year's activities.

The most immediate item on the agenda now is the launch of the Branch Website, which is coming to you real soon, probably prior to you receiving this Newsletter. You will all or have all received an email inviting you to join the website, implement a username and password and go live. This will allow you to view what is happening within your Branch, go shopping for Branch Merchandise and pay online, plus much, much more. A big thank you to the Branch President who initiated this idea, Mick Cole and his son, for doing the initial work on putting the website together and to Josh Fox who has completed the website and made it possible for you the membership to go browsing at your leisure.

Poland is next on the agenda, a trip to Schindler's Factory, the Salt Mines and Auschwitz, organised by Mark O, Mahony, this takes place over the period 23 May 2025 – 26 May 2025, thanks to Mark for all his efforts and getting this trip off the ground. Those of you who are registered will have all the details of the trip directly via email from Mark.

Chris Zeil has been busy organising the Bow Shackle Ball, and it appears that he is on for a record attendance this year, so thanks to Chris and to you all and it is really nice to see some new names on the attendance list, there may well still be a few spaces available, interested, please contact:

treasurer.recymechbranch@gmail.com .

The Branch President is also very busy, John Sibley, in conjunction with others is in the process of attempting to organise an event which shall be known as "Winch to the Wall". This will involve setting up a date whereby the main event will be to give members and family members the opportunity to visit the Recovery Mechanic Memorial Wall situated inside the home of REME at Lyneham. Such an event would also give those attending the opportunity to visit the Corp Museum and if it can also be arranged, the possibility of visiting Roger Jones Hanger (better known as E Sheds or Historic Vehicles) Thanks to John and all involved as I believe this would be a very popular event and should it come to successful fruition, it could very well become an annual event.

Stuart Martin has also been busy creating a Table Centre Piece. Currently we do have a few Branch Centre Pieces, which have mainly been donations which we are very grateful to have, other pieces we use at our Annual Ball are very kindly loaned to us from the WO & Sgts Mess at Lyneham. Some time ago the idea was floated to have manufactured a Centre Piece that reflected Recovery Vehicles, Stu Martin put his hand up (thanks Stu) and said he could do that. Within the Branch funds we have a fund known as the "Bis Fund", this money is donations made to the Branch by the late Nigel Bisgrove's family. After a committee discussion and approval of the Bisgrove family, that we could use such money to create a unique two vehicle centre piece, to be named in the memory of Nigel Bisgrove, the piece is in its final stages of manufacture and will be first displayed at the Bow Shackle Ball in October 2025.



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FORTH COMING EVENTS

ARV annual outing will take place in the usual place at Millers, Sipson over the period 4/5 April 2025

REME Reunion will take place at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire over the period 11/14 April 2025.

Branch Overseas Trip to Poland will take place over the dates 23 – 26 May 2025. Those attending shall receive final details from Mark via personal email.

WO & SNCO Reunion will take place in Lyneham over the period 20/22 June 2025

REME National Memorial Day will take place on 1 October 2025 at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Bow Shackle Ball 2025 will be held at the Mickleover Hotel, near Derby on the 4 October, 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, a few spaces are still available.



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



OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

Keep your eyes on the Branch Website and Facebook Page for information on "Winch to The Wall". We believe that this event will be very popular and when all the arrangements are in place it will be publicised on the platforms mentioned above.

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. We have our first request of this nature below:

John Sibley writes:

Has anybody seen Mick Henderson? Mick completed 22 years and finished as a SSgt at 2 Bn REME. I believe he settled in Herford, Germany. Mick and I served together at 15/19 KRH on Detmold in 1988-1991. He isn't a branch member and I've not seen or heard from him since I left Germany for the last time in 2000 and would love to be able to catch up.

MEMBERSHIP SUBMISSIONS

Unfortunately, there have been no submissions from the membership, generally we do receive a few that helps fill out the pages in the Newsletter. Interestingly we have one of the largest memberships within REME Association, currently just under 700 members and not one submission to grace the pages of your Newsletter, I never ever thought that the Humble Recovery Mechanics were such shy people.

We are very much aware that people have far more important things on their mind and to do rather than writing a piece for a Newsletter, however when you stand in a bar with group of Recovery Mechanics and just listen to what is being said and being talked about, all those memories and great deeds that occurred during service life, it would be possible to write a book. A great idea, write a book, the Branch President, John Sibley, volunteered to do just that some two years ago, and out of all the hundreds of stories heard in a bar, when requested to submit the stories so that a Recovery Mechanics Journal could be created, only a handful of submissions were received, not sufficient to kick off a Journal.

As a Branch of the REME Association we have travelled a long way, originally a Branch of the Royal British Legion and then transferred over to REME Association in October 2020, the original committee and all those who have served on the committee since have done a great job getting the Branch to where we find it today, and unlike some other Branches, formed without any joining fees. The Branch started with a few dozen and has worked hard to achieve current day numbers, we are a unique outfit, we have, Branch Standard (actually 2 Standards due to being a National Branch and the geographical area covered) Branch Funeral Drape, Branch unique Pin Badge, Branch Merchandise with embroidered logo, an annual ball, annual trips away, must surely be one of the first Branches to set up its own website and hopefully implement an annual pilgrimage to visit the Memorial Wall at Lyneham, paying our respects and remembering those who are no longer with us.



Committee members willing give free time to organise, administer all the events and activities that the Branch offer to the membership, we do this to keep our unique trade unique and keep all who are serving and have served as Recovery Mechanics together as the Band of Brothers and Sisters that we are. The Newsletter was implemented on a quarterly basis to keep the membership up to date with what is going on in the world of the Recovery Mechanic and give you, the membership an opportunity, where desired, to have a voice, look for old colleagues, tell a few historic stories, possibly about tasks that you have done and adding a few photographs of your memories.

To date the Newsletter has been found to be very favourable with the membership and we very much want to continue with the quarterly issue, this however can only be possible if we continue to get some articles from the membership, otherwise the content may become very boring with only the Headlines and Finally sections being the main articles. We could indeed cut it back to 6 monthly, but fear that we would then possibly miss out in getting possible important news to you.

As previously said, we are very much aware and understand that people have much more important things to do than write articles for a Newsletter, but we do respectfully request that from time to time you consider writing a few lines, tell a story, send in some photographs of recovery related matters of where and when etc. We would really appreciate your efforts, and you would be helping to keep the Quarterly Newsletter alive.

Moving On



We have been extremely lucky that we have had Joe Williams, WO1 ASM at the Recovery Training Wing at Lyneham on board the committee. Joe has been a great asset to the Branch representing our serving members and very importantly a link between serving and veteran, a link that has kept the Branch up to date with all modern-day events within the Recovery Trade.

A big congratulations to Joe as he moves on from Lyneham having been selected for commission and now holding the rank of Captain, yet another example of how far the trade of Recovery Mechanic has evolved over the years. Joe has stated that he would still like to keep a close relationship with the Branch and where possible still assist.

The Branch thanks Joe for all his efforts and hard work during his time within the committee and wish him all the very best for the future.



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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.



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Relate



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AND FINALLY

Its already the end of March, where did those 3 months go? I guess as I get older, time seems to be speeding up. When I look back at the last 3 months it's been interesting to say the least. Mr Trump, Mr Putin, Mr Zelensky, Mr Netanyahu and Yahya Sinwar. Iran, Yemen, North Korea, Syria, Sudan, Myanmar, Marli, Taiwan and loads more world trouble spots, it seems the world is going to hell in a handcart to quote a phrase!

Thank goodness for a bit of normality. The ARV takes place over 4 - 6 of April. The REME Reunion on the weekend of the 11-14 April at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire. The Branch annual international trip which this year takes us to Auschwitz in May. The SNCO Reunion at Lyneham over the weekend 20 – 22 June. The Corps Memorial Day at the National Memorial Arboretum on the 1 Oct. Too many to name them all here but you get the idea, loads to look forward to in the coming months without even switching on the news! But obviously the big one for the branch is the annual Bow Shackle Ball taking place at the Derby Mickleover Hotel over the weekend of 3 – 6 Oct. This year's guest of honour is the current Corps Col, Col Ian Wallace OBE ADC. We are expecting the largest turnout for a BSB so far, over 75 have confirmed they are attending which is awesome. If you haven't got your name down and would like to attend contact Chris Ziel on treasurer.recymechbranch@gmail.com and see if he can squeeze you in.

We are also busy trying to fix a date for a visit to the Recovery Mechanic Memorial Wall, Lyneham, which will include a museum visit including a tour of the reserve vehicle collection, exclusively for branch members, more to follow so keep an eye on the Facebook page for details as numbers will be limited and it will be a case of first come first served.

I would encourage you all to try and get to at least one event this year, its good for the soul and great to catch up with folk you haven't seen in an age and frankly life is to short not too.

The world may be going bonkers, but we are just getting on with stuff. So, if you find yourself worried about what's going on or worried about anything, there's always someone you can talk to, someone who can help. Contact the branch, we can help, or we know someone who can. Contact the Corps welfare team they can put you in touch with a REME Responder, people just like you. Additionally, there are numerous organisations and numbers on the previous page should you ever have the requirement. And if all else fails remember:

Remain Calm
Keep Winching
And
Don't let the B@stards get you down

I hope to catch up with loads of you over the coming months

Cheers all,

John