



**NEWSLETTER**

**RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH**

**REME ASSOCIATION**



**NEWSLETTER  
EDITION 17  
OCTOBER 2025**



#### HEADLINES

Your Branch branching out, it has experienced a great few months with successes, growth, and unity, a triumphant few months and a collective achievement.

Over the past few months, the Branch has flourished, thanks to the dedication, creativity, and camaraderie of the committee, third parties and of course you, our members. From successful events to new initiatives that sparked real change, we've seen what's possible when we work together with purpose. This Newsletter celebrates those achievements, shares updates from across our network, and looks ahead to the exciting opportunities on the horizon

One of the brightest highlights this season was our unforgettable BSB. With record numbers and spirits high, members even took to the dancefloor, raising over £2,000 of which a proportion will be divided between some charities. The event wasn't just a success in numbers, it was a joyful reminder of what makes our Branch so special, a huge thanks to everyone who helped organise, promote, and participate. You made it magical.

Branching out and breaking new ground, the Branch introduced "Winch to the Wall", an event that drives focus on the past and engages with Branch Families. The sparkle wouldn't have shone quite so brightly on this event without the efforts of the Branch President, John Sibley and his team of helpers, whose tireless energy and creative flair ensured the event was a great success.

As we head into the winter months, the Branch Committee are now focusing on the future and already hard at it with Chris Zeil having already secured and booked the venue for Bow Shackle Ball 26. Details are contained within this Newsletter and more shall come soon, but for now, let's just say: if you liked the BSB25, get your place booked now, if you were not in attendance, you can break new ground by making BSB26 an even bigger success.

As we reflect on the successes behind us and the Branch plans looking ahead, one thing remains clear, our strength lies in each other. Whether you've led a project, lent a hand, or simply cheered us on from the sidelines, your presence matters. Thank you for being part of this great vibrant community. Let's keep going forward, together.

Detail of all the above events are contained within these pages, pour yourself a drink of your fancy, sit down and enjoy the read.

Stay Safe

BC



#### OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

During the period since the last Newsletter, Edition 16, June 2025, the Branch received notification of the passing of 1 Veteran Recovery Mechanic:



Unfortunately, and like so many other notifications received by the Branch of colleagues who have passed we struggle to obtain detail of the passing which very much limits the Branch in offering any assistance to a grieving family, it is also very difficult to get anyone to write a eulogy on the individual who has passed.

The Branch very much appreciate that members do report the passing of a fellow Recovery Mechanic, please keep doing so, and if possible, gather as much information as you can so that it may be possible to offer some assistance to the family.

We also, at times, struggle to identify the individuals as having served as a Recovery Mechanics, this slows down the process of having a plaque placed on the Memorial Wall at Lyneham. If you happen to have known an individual who has passed, it would be appreciated if you could comment

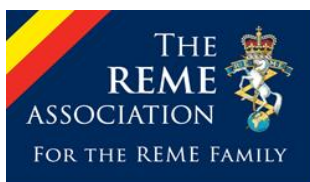
on such and that would allow a plaque to be placed at the earliest convenience of the Recovery Training Wing at Lyneham.

#### COMMITTEE NEWS

The committee continue to work hard ensuring that the membership is kept up to date with all that is going on behind the scenes. It is the efforts of the committee and some helpers that make the Branch the best (not what I am saying, what people from REME HQ say, and of course I agree with them) and largest in REME Association. Membership now stands at more than 715, this includes Serving, Reservist, Veteran, Honorary and Family Members.

Work is continually going on to improve the Branch website, increase membership numbers, keeping the financials in order so that it allows donations to charity. Currently we are looking at having the Branch Logo registered as a Trademark to protect it from being used by others outside of the Branch and we are always looking out for new ways to improve the services and events on offer, plus, always being open to new ventures, so if you have something constructive and worthwhile that you would like to see us do, let's be having it!

#### FORTH COMING EVENTS





Remembrance Day Sunday 09 November 2025 - The Branch will parade, with Standard in Whitby, Yorkshire in Remembrance of the late Andy Found, with a wreath laying ceremony.

November 09 REME will again have representatives, including some Branch Members parading in London at the Cenotaph.

REME, including Branch Members will host the Dutch Regiment of Technical Troops (RTT) on a series of tours in the UK, such as the Arboretum and REME facilities. This all kicks off in March 2026 and will include Branch Members who will travel to the Netherlands for Dutch celebrations. A short piece of the RTT history is shown below.



*Despite the fact that there was already motorization of the Dutch army before the Second World War, the tradition of the Regiment Technical Troops (RTT) is embedded in the Royal Dutch Brigade Princess Irene.*

*In Congleton (UK) the Light Aid Detachment was established on March 20, 1941 as part of the brigade. This was a small independent recovery unit. Soon this was converted into a much heavier - Independent Workshop Detachment - that could carry out repairs up to the current 3rd echelon and had special workshop cars. After the disbandment of the brigade,*

*a 4th-line workshop of the Canadians in Eindhoven could be taken over. This formed the basis for the Central Workshop at the Kromhout barracks and the expansion of the RTT.*

#### OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

Whilst we do not have any firm dates, yet we are extremely hopeful that the following events will take place during 2026.

An overseas trip to visit War Graves, areas of interest being looked at are Normandy Beaches and Pegasus Bridge. Full detail when known will be advertised through the Branch normal media channels.

Winch to the Wall, although nothing yet has been confirmed and after the great success of Winch to the Wall 2025 it is hoped that the Branch will hold a 2026 event. Again, keep your eyes peeled on the Branch media channels for details.

Date for Mainstream REME events can be found by logging in to REME Connect.

Below on page 5 you will see the advert for the BSB 2026, after reading this Newsletter surely it will spark an interest to attend, so don't delay, get your place booked today.



REME Association



## RECOVERY MECHANICS BRANCH BOW SHACKLE BALL

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2026

staying at the **Best Western Plus Ullesthorpe Court Hotel & Golf Club, Frolesworth Road, Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire, LE17 5BZ**

### YOUR WEEKEND PACKAGE INCLUDES:

Bed & Breakfast. AGM Saturday afternoon. Gala Dinner Saturday Night 26<sup>th</sup> September 2026. Silent Raffle. Auction. Disco.

Gala Dinner.....£50.00 per Guest.

Standard & Executive Double Room...Double Occupancy £100.00 per night.

Standard & Executive Double Room...Single Occupancy £90.00 per night.

**Please note we only have 6 Standard Doubles, two of which are Accessible with wet room, 8 Standard Twins & 17 Executive Doubles available.**

Superior Double Room...Double Occupancy £130.00 per night.

Superior Double Room...Single Occupancy £120.00 per night.

**Please note we only have 9 available.**

Suite...Double Occupancy £150.00 per night.

Suite...Single Occupancy £140.00 per night.

**Please note we only have 2 available.**

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

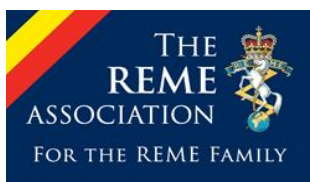
**PAYMENT:** Full Payment is due by 12<sup>th</sup> August 2026, staged payments accepted before this date, contact myself for more details.

**Pay Direct into our Bank:** Lloyds Bank, Recy Mech Branch, Sort Code: 30-99-50, Account Number: 84352668 Please use BSB26 as the payment reference.

All enquiries email: Chris Zeil, [treasurer.recymechbranch@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.recymechbranch@gmail.com)

### 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](mailto: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

#### Life as an Army Brat

I didn't sign the dotted line, but I still served—served a childhood of MFO boxes, goodbyes, and entire walls covered in regimental crests. I'm what you'd call an Army Brat: born into olive green chaos and raised by a battalion of 'Uncles' who weren't remotely related but could assemble a BBQ in under five minutes with nothing but a multi-tool and a scowl. Growing up as a REME kid meant moving house almost as often as changing socks. Every two years like clockwork—new school, new friends, new layout of furniture that must be arranged exactly like the last quarter, even if the radiators in a totally stupid place. And then, of course, there was the ritual of "marching in" and "marching out" of a quarter, when every teaspoon had to be lined up like it was on parade. I still remember our cutlery laid out in perfect formation beside the gleaming pots and pans—because heaven help you if a fork wasn't in alignment.

But of all the postings, my fondest memories come from 7 Armoured in Fallingbowl. That place was the bee's knees. Or rather, the mosquito's knees—because let me tell you, the army swimming pool was teeming with cleggs. I still have phantom itches thinking about them. You'd dive in for a splash and come out looking like you'd lost a fight with a dartboard. But we didn't care. Sun, chlorine, and cleggs were just part of the experience.

BBQs were a staple of life, and I swear the smell of burnt sausages and ration-packs still gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling to this day. There'd be music, mismatched patio furniture, and every adult would be someone's 'Uncle'—Uncle Chris, Uncle Steve, Uncle Phil, Uncle that-bloke-who-once-fitted-a-tap. They all took turns babysitting me, and to this day, I've never quite trusted a man in civvies who can't iron a shirt with military precision.

One of my favourite memories is sitting at the kitchen table before school, still rubbing sleep from my eyes, while Dad walked in the door—not from night shift, but from a poker game.

The man never came back empty-handed. He'd chuck his winnings on the table like some victorious outlaw and then proceed to fry bacon as if it were just another Tuesday.

My dad, Jim MacDonald, was the backbone of it all. He wasn't just my hero—he was the man. The first Recy Mech to reach the rank of WO1, he earned the respect of his boys, and he thought the world of them. He taught me about pride without ego, strength without shouting, and how to fix most things with a pair of pliers and some muttered Scottish encouragement.

There was a camaraderie not just among the soldiers, but in the families too. We Brats had our own unit—a feral gang of kids on bikes, skidding through tank trails and inventing elaborate games with rules nobody followed. You never knew if your best friend would still be around next month, so you made the most of every second.

It wasn't always easy—packing up your life again and again, missing family events back home, and pretending to like compo food—but being raised by the Army gave me something solid: resilience, humour, and a deep respect for those who serve. I learned early on that strength doesn't just wear boots; sometimes it wears pigtailed and hauls duvets into yet another MQ with a sigh and a smile.





To all the other Army Brats out there—whether you grew up at Fallingbostel, Osnabrück, or some windswept camp in the middle of nowhere—we know what it meant to grow up between postings, parade grounds, and pre-inspection panics. And I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Article by - Tina Macdonald Wood



#### Winch to the Wall2025 – We will remember them

In the finest traditions of the Recovery trade an idea was put forward to have a memorial wall for Recy Mechs who are no longer with us. Where they could be remembered by a simple name plaque. As with everything of this nature there were many hurdles to jump and hoops to go through but jump and go through them, they did and in 2017 the original wall was erected. Since then, it has been added too and enhanced to what we see today using funds raised by members of the RTW, the wider Recovery Mechanic family and other benefactors. It stands as a lasting memorial to all Recovery Mechanics and testament to the camaraderie and Esprit de Corps that every Recy Mech has for their trade.

But because the wall is inside the wire at MOD Lyneham it is not somewhere non-serving folk can just drop in and see for obvious reasons. This is where the branch stepped in to organise an official trip so that members of the branch and families of deceased Recy Mechs could visit the memorial wall, but what to call the event? Everyone has heard of "Ride to the Wall", an event for motorcyclists from all over the country to support the National Memorial Arboretum, well if its good enough for them its good enough for us, so "Winch to the Wall" was born, although no actual winching is involved much to some members disappointment! We wanted to make the day as special as we could for all those attending, so we needed more than just a visit to the wall, although this was main event. We spoke with the REME Museum and organised for a guided tour around the Roger Jones MBE hanger which houses the historic vehicle collection and the main museum galleries.

We descended on the REME museum in force on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. Having sustained ourselves in Crowns café and had the obligatory H&S briefing we were ready to go. We all moved to the Roger Jones MBE hanger where we were split into 2 groups. Group one reboarded the minibuses and went over to visit the wall at the RTW while group 2 had a guided tour of the historic vehicles. After the groups had completed both activities, we moved back to the main museum building and a leisurely stroll through the Corps history.



*Hanging on his every word, Shane Hallett gives a masterful performance in the Roger Jones MBE Hanger*



It was a very real pleasure to be able to assist the families of deceased comrades who attended the day. It was an emotional day for the parents and brother of someone who went far to early and for the son and daughter of a Recy Mech long passed. I hope the experience evoked memories of happy times with the lost relatives and the knowledge that no matter what, they will be remembered by their beloved trade.

### WE WILL REMEMBER THE



Families remembering their loved ones at the Recovery Mechanic Memorial Wall

And finally, the thanks. To the REME museum for collaborating with the branch in this endeavour, especially Claire and Fi. Maj Ron Karby, Shane Hallett, Sgt Paul Bruce, Stu Martin, Ian Macdonald and anyone else who helped with the planning and execution of the inaugural Winch to the Wall. But most importantly the biggest thank you goes to all those who attended and supported the branch and families, I hope you all enjoyed it and here's to the next one.

**Article by - John Sibley**



### The Bow Shackle Ball 2025

On the first weekend in Oct the Recovery Mechanic branch of the REME Association held its annual Bow Shackle Ball. It was held at the Derby Mickleover Hotel, and we were thrilled to welcome 76 people to the ball, including our guests of honour, Colonel REME, Col Iain Wallace OBE ADC and his lady wife Claire, we also welcomed Babs Harris, Chief Executive of the REME Charity and Misty McCready, REME Association Development Officer.

Many guests arrived at the hotel on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October ready to begin the festivities, however a small but dedicated group had arrived earlier that week in order to practise the required skills for the weekend ahead. Friday evening saw an informal gathering where old friends were reunited over one or two small pale sherries and sausage roll or two, while welcoming later arrivals with challenges to their map reading competences, planning skills and tardiness





on parade. All of which was, obviously taken in the playful way it was intended, with some equally playful reply's, I'll leave that one there I think!!

The branch held its AGM on the Saturday afternoon with the available committee members sitting in reverence. We had a good attendance and, as always, a live video link for members to join the meeting who could not be there in person was available. A selection of branch merchandise was also available for members to buy at special Bow Shackle Ball rates and as Recy Mechs like a bargain this went down very well.



And so, to the ball. We assembled for pre-dinner drinks and formal photographs at 18:00, dressed in our finest, all our ladies looked spectacular as always and no two dresses were the same (Phew). First up were formal photographs, Ian Macdonald very kindly donated his time and not inconsiderable talent as our photographer again this year. He did a sterling job and even managed to make our chairman look good, some feat that, by the way! I met our guest of honour and his wife in the foyer and as the dinner bell sounded, we took our seats at table. Being Recy Mechs there was very little,

small talk whilst food was on the table but between courses there was some lively banter in the room and a stack of impromptu photo opportunities that the eager Mr Macdonald and I pounced on. The food was great, the service excellent and the company second to none, I believe everyone enjoyed their dinner and got totally into the spirit of the evening. Bring on the after-dinner disco, but not before raising a serious amount of money for charity. We had a silent raffle and a concurrent auction where mayhem ruled as the auctioneers hearing aids clearly weren't working as they should, but in the end, we made £2074.15 which be distributed to worthy causes. A massive thank you to all who donated prizes for both the raffle and auction, be very proud of yourselves, and to Mr Paul Shepard who donated several branch merchandise items free of charge. But especially to those that bought raffle tickets and bid in the auction, your generosity never ceases to amaze me.



The dance floor was packed from the first to the last song, even with people that wouldn't usually dance (You know who you are!!). We even managed to get a group photo of virtually everyone without injury, no mean feat either I'd say.



# NEWSLETTER

## RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

### REME ASSOCIATION



Packed dance floor



Col REME and

Claire, big



winners on the night (eat your heart out Potteries branch!!)





And that was at the end of the night

The following morning at breakfast with a few who were slightly jaded to say the least we all said our farewells for another year. A stunning success yet again for the main man behind its organisation, Chris Zeil, well done Chris, same again next year please. Speaking of next year, our Bow Shackle Ball will be held at Ullesthorpe Court hotel and golf club on the 26

See you next year

**Article by - John Sibley**

#### **The Recovery Mechanic Memorial Wall Tribute in Miniature.**

How Stuart Martin's Handcrafted a 1/72 Scale Diorama Masterpiece that Raised £350 at the Bow Shackle Ball 2025

#### **Introduction**

In a remarkable intersection of art, remembrance, and generosity, the Bow Shackle Ball 2025 featured the auction of a unique diorama: a meticulous 1/72 scale model of the Recovery Mechanic Memorial wall. Crafted by Stuart Martin, this miniature tribute captivated attendees and ultimately raised an impressive £350 for charity.





### Building the Memorial in Miniature

The Recovery Mechanic Memorial wall stands as a tribute to the individuals who have served as recovery mechanics, honouring their dedication and sacrifice. Stuart Martin, driven by a profound respect for his brotherhood, embarked on the challenging task of recreating the memorial in 1/72 scale, a size that demands both patience and precision.

Using a combination of modelling materials, archival photographs, and an eye for detail, Stuart captured the essence of the original structure. Every element, from the engraved plaques to the subtle weathering of the stonework, was rendered with an authenticity that invited close inspection. The diorama not only replicated the physical features of the memorial but also conveyed the dignity and solemnity of the real site.

### The Bow Shackle Ball 2025 Auction



The Bow Shackle Ball, a highlight in the calendar for the recovery and engineering community, provides an opportunity for camaraderie, fundraising, and remembrance. In 2025, the event included a silent auction, where Martin's diorama quickly drew attention. Attendees were moved by the craftsmanship and the story behind the piece, leading to enthusiastic bidding that culminated in a final sale price of £350.

The funds raised from the auction will go towards supporting veterans, active service members, and their families—ensuring that the legacy of recovery mechanics continues to be honoured not just in stone, but through tangible acts of support.

### A Personal Reflection from the Builder

For myself, the project was a labour of love. "I wanted to create something that would keep the memory of recovery mechanics alive, especially for those who might never visit the actual memorial," he shared. "Every detail mattered—because every name on that wall matters."





#### Conclusion

The 1/72 scale diorama of the Recovery Mechanic Memorial wall stands as a testament to the power of remembrance and the generosity of a community united in respect and gratitude. Through the dedication of the builder and the generosity shown at the Bow Shackle Ball 2025, the spirit of those commemorated endures, both in miniature and in the real world.

Arte et Marte

Article by – Stuart Martin

#### 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



REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch  
recymechbranch@gmail.com





#### AND FINALLY

What a great month we have just had. The Bow Shackle Ball was a phenomenal event, the biggest attendance we have ever had and attended by our Corps Col. Chris Zeil has a big job to beat that next year, but you can bet he will do his utmost. So go on, treat the special person in your life with a weekend away, contact Chris and get your name down for the only annual Recovery Mechanic ladies dinner night.

Once again, we held our AGM on the same weekend, as has become the custom. Thank you to all those who attended and showed your support for the committee that works tirelessly for you, the members. Not going to be able to make it next year, don't worry we always have a live link, so you don't have to be in the room to show your support, just log in and take 40 minutes out of your year to support your branch, it's not asking for much is it?

Your committee have put on some great events again this year, not just the fantastic Bow Shackle Ball. We went to Krakow in Poland and visited Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps, we held our inaugural Winch to the Wall giving the opportunity for non-serving members and families of our fallen to see our memorial wall inside the wire of MOD, Lyneham. We proudly marched in Ilkeston, Derbyshire on Remembrance Sunday with the family of Kevin "Dinger" Bell who we lost on operations in Bosnia 1998. Keep an eye out in the coming months for next year's events. The branch is for all members so let's see a few new faces enjoying the camaraderie we all remember from our service.

I'll finish on a word of caution if I may. Over the weekend of the Bow Shackle Ball one of my bank cards was "compromised" according to my bank. They instantly stopped the card, so no damage done there, thankfully. Although it was slightly embarrassing when I came to pay for my auction win and the card was rejected!! When I spoke to my bank, they instantly jumped on the fact that I was using an insecure Wi-Fi login in a hotel and assumed that this was how it could be compromised. I still have no idea what this means and had no idea how vulnerable we all are to this type of attack. So, be careful out there folks there are some right dodgy geezers around, I'll not use an insecure Wi-Fi login again, that's for sure.

Cheers all

John