# CHRISTMAS EDITION NEWSLETTER

## HEADLINES

Hello everyone, so, here it is Merry Christmas, everybody's having fun, or so the song goes, for those who are old enough to remember it. Its fast approaching Again!! Another year chalked off, but has it been a good one for you?

For me 2025 has been a mixed bag. It started with a funeral of a friend, Big Van Carter. He and I were on the same basic course but saw very little of each other after that. Yet strangely his passing deeply affected me, it never ceases to amaze me that although you may not see friends from one year to the next they are always with you and you still feel their joy and sadness in equal measure.

Anne and I had a glorious 4 week adventure in the Philippines in February and a lovely week in the Lake District in April with a couple of our grandchildren, I love them all (5 of them) to bits but they exhaust me, so I needed a holiday after that, didn't get one though!!

The branch visited Krakow in May and had a great time but visiting Auschwitz and Birkenau brings life into perspective, that's for sure.

My better half, Anne had her right knee replaced in June and I got referred to the hospital for hearing aids, I have them now and sometimes wish I didn't!!

Summer came and went and then we had Winch to the Wall in September, which was a very moving day for those who attended, especially the families of passed Recy Mechs remembered on the wall.

1st of Oct I was at the National Memorial Arboretum for the Corps Memorial Day, and that following weekend was having a knees up at the Bow Shackle Ball. Was I the only attendee not to win a raffle prize, ah well you can't win them all.

This year the branch attended Remembrance Day in Whitby, to remember Cfn Andy Found who was killed in action in Afghanistan on the 16th June 2011. We met up with his family, marched with our standard flying in the parade, laid a wreath at the war memorial before going to Andy's grave where his widow and son laid a wreath on the grave. Yet again, a very moving day for us all but an act of remembrance for one of own.

So that's my year in a nutshell, obviously there were many more bumps in the road than these but overall, it's not been a bad year and far better than most I imagine. Going through my year makes me appreciate how lucky I am compared to so many others. If you feel the same think about an act of kindness that you can do that someone you know or a random stranger would appreciate. If you can do nothing else, spare a thought for those less fortunate than yourself this Christmas. There is enough bad stuff happening all over the world this year, at least we can try and compensate for it just a tiny bit.

A very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year to you all, Arte et Marte.

Cheers

*John*

## OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

During the period since the last Newsletter, Edition 17, October 2025, the Branch received the following notification and with much regret report the passing of **Gareth Davis**. No further details are known currently. Should anyone have any further details could you please inform the Branch to enable any assistance that may be required?

The Branch very much appreciate that members keep reporting 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 shall be putting their feet up soon after the last meeting of the year on 11 December for a well earned rest, charge their batteries in preparation to continue forging ahead in 2026 to give you the members the Branch that you rightly all deserve.

## FORTH COMING EVENTS

2026 will once again be busy for the committee, we intend to hold all the favourites.

We are hoping to once again be setting off into Europe to visit the D-Day beaches and Pegasus Bridge.

After the great success of Winch to the Wall, we plan to hold a second coming.

And of course the Bow Shackle Ball returns in September 26, see below for details.

We have also been asked to help the Dutch Regiment of Technical Troops (RTT) celebrate their 85th anniversary as set out in Newsletter Edition 17.

We also hope to be parading again next year for Remembrance Day, to help remember more fallen comrades.

All details, dates and times will be advertised on both the Facebook pages and website in due course.

REME Association

# RECOVERY MECHANICS BRANCH
# BOW SHACKLE BALL

## Friday 25th - Sunday 27th 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 26th 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 12th 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**

## 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

### Ceramony of Remembrance - Whitby – Remembrance Sunday 09 November 2025

The Branch has always been well represented at the Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph in London, but over the last couple of years, whilst still having a few representatives at the Cenotaph the Branch chose to do something different, something for the families of “Lost in Action” Recovery Mechanics. As most will be aware, in the more recent conflicts three very brave Recovery Mechanics gave the ultimate sacrifice. As Branch we thought it would be good to do something for the families and subject to family approval it was decided that we would travel to hometowns of those who never came home.

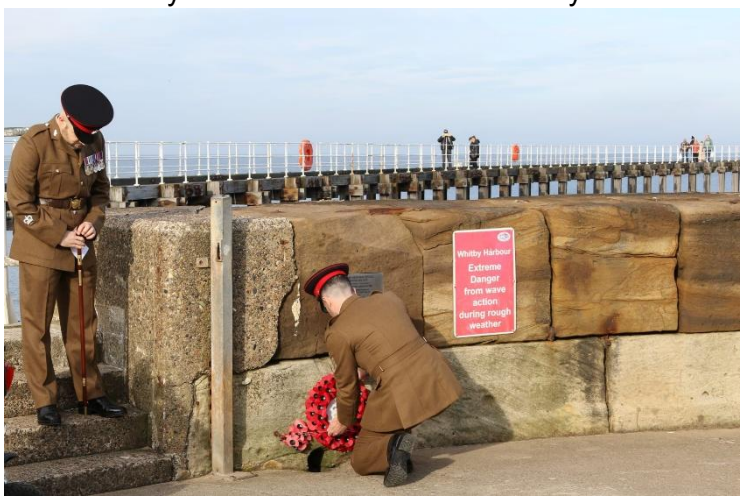
Last year, November 2024 we went to Ilkeston, Derby where we were joined by the Bell Family, we marched with the local Royal British Legion, along with the Bell Family where a wreath was laid at the local War Memorial and then visited the Resting Place of Kevin “Dinger” Bell and where the family lain a wreath on behalf of the Branch. This was of course followed by the traditional Recovery Mechanic event of tea and cakes.

This year, 2025, 16 of the Branch Members went to Whitby, North Yorkshire where arrangements had been made to join up with the Found Family, to remember and pay respects to Andy Found. Again, we had also planned with the local Royal British Legion that we could march with them on their

Remembrance Parade and attended their service at the Whitby War Memorial where the Branch President laid a wreath on behalf of the Branch. The march to the Whitby War Memorial was not too far but it was a very enjoyable experience as we were invited to march with Regular REME Soldiers from 1 Close Support Battalion,

based at Catterick Garrison, a Company from the Battalion go and march in Whitby every year on Remembrance Sunday. I think all the Veteran Recovery Mechanics really enjoyed it, and what is more, kept in step, it is amazing the difference when there is only one Sgt Major calling out the timing, (unlike London where you don't know which Sgt Majors voice to follow). It was a beautiful Sunday morning and a very big turnout at the Service, and of course we had the Branch Standard on parade, carried by Chris Zeil. Immediately after the parade the Soldiers from 1 Battalion marched off at a very fast pace to the Whitby Pier, they were joined at the pier by the Found Family, Branch Members and many local people. On a plaque inserted on the pier wall there are the names of two local soldiers who had lost their lives to war conflict, the late Cfn Andy Found was one of them, the officers and soldiers of 1 Battalion laid a wreath against the wall where the plaque is displayed.

After the visit to the plaque location, along with the Found Family & friends, the Branch Veterans, Members of the local RBL and Officers, Sgt Major of 1 Battalion and a bugler we all proceeded to the resting place of the late Andy Found. Arrival at the cemetery also found the resting place of another, the late ASM John Buck, his grave located immediately in front of that of Andy, two REME soldiers at rest. This situation is quite unique as ASM John Buck, during the Afghanistan conflict, where Andy Founds lost his life, was actually Andy's boss, how unique is that, and laid to rest in the same cemetery and so close to each other. All in attendance firstly visited the graveside of John Buck, whose father was in attendance, the Branch Chairman said a few words and laid a wreath on John's grave.



All then moved the few steps to the side of the grave of Andy, again, the Chairman said a few words and invited the Samantha Found (Hicks), widow of Andy and Jackson Found, son of Andy to lay the Branch wreath on behalf of the family and the Branch. The Branch Standard was present during this event, and the bugler played the last post, followed by a minute's silence and reveille.

After the short ceremony the Branch President presented Samantha with a Branch Honorary Members Pin Badge. The photographs within this article show various stages of events during this sad yet very memorable occasion. The Branch are extremely thankful to all who participated, travelled distances to be there to remember, most of all a big thank you to the Found Family for agreeing and permitting the Branch to arrange such a ceremony – it was an absolute pleasure. Afterwards, all retired to a Whitby Watering Establishment – for tea, coffee and cakes – of course!

Below you shall see some more photographs of the day, all taken Ian Macdonald during the events:

**The night before**

**IN THE SANDWICH BAR**

**DISTRACTED BY SOMETHING ON THE STREETS OF WHITBY!!**

## BEFORE THE PARADE

**THREE WISE MEN**

**THE PRESIDENT RECRUITING THE YOUNGER GENERATION**

## THE PARADE

**SGT MAJOR DOING A GREAT JOB**

**THE VETERANS**

**THE NEW**

**AND**

**THE OLD**

**CHRIS WITH**

**THE BRANCH STANDARD**

**THE PRESIDENT HAVING JUST LAID THE BRANCH WREATH**

## WHITBY PIER

**VERY PROUD REME OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS**

**A CRAFTSMAN LAYING THE WREATH AT THE PIER**

**RESPECT**

## THE CEMETARY

**FAMILY, FRIENDS, OFFICERS & VETERANS GATHERED AS A FEW WORDS ARE SAID**

**JACKSON AND HIS MUM LAY THE BRANCH WREATH**

**MR BUCK REMEMBERING HIS SON**

## THE FOUND FAMILY

**Submitted by BC**

**Remembrance and Wreath Laying at the Recovery Training Wing Memorial Wall**

*WO1 (ASM) Danny Martin leads the parade as wreaths are laid at the Recy Mech Memorial Wall, honouring the fallen and celebrating the enduring spirit of the Recovery Mechanic trade.*

On a cold and blustery day at MOD Lyneham, the Recovery Training Wing (RTW) gathered at the Recy Mech Memorial Wall for a poignant wreath-laying ceremony. The weather, harsh and unforgiving, reflected the solemnity of the occasion as staff, trainees, and guests paid tribute to fallen comrades of the Recovery Mechanic trade.

The ceremony was attended by RTW staff, current trainees, the Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major (Rob Lord, a Recy Mech) of 8 Training Battalion, Company OC, Babcock employees, and an Army Reservist bugler. Representing the REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch were Stu Martin and Bob Fullbrook, with Stu laying a wreath on behalf of the branch and Bob proudly carrying the branch standard.

The parade was led by WO1 (ASM) Danny Martin and SSgt Jamie Story. The Act of Remembrance was conducted by ASM Martin alongside Cpl Wright, one of the Class 1 trainees, culminating in the haunting notes of the Last Post as the standard was lowered in respect.

The first wreath, representing the branch, was laid by Stu Martin. A second wreath, lovingly crafted by Emma, Bob Fullbrook's better half, was placed by Cfn West the youngest Craftsman currently in training on their Class 3 course — a symbolic gesture linking past, present, and future generations of Recovery Mechanics.

This event was more than a ceremony; it was a powerful display of the spirit, pride, and brotherhood that define the Recovery Mechanic trade.

**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.

REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch
recymechbranch@gmail.com

01302347866
Relate

08002606767
SSAFA Forces Line

08001381619
Combat Stress Military Helpline

TEXT 24/7
The Shout Text Service

08088084000
National Debtline

08009177650
Alcoholics 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

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

01904882053
Army Welfare Service

remeconnect.org
01249 894507

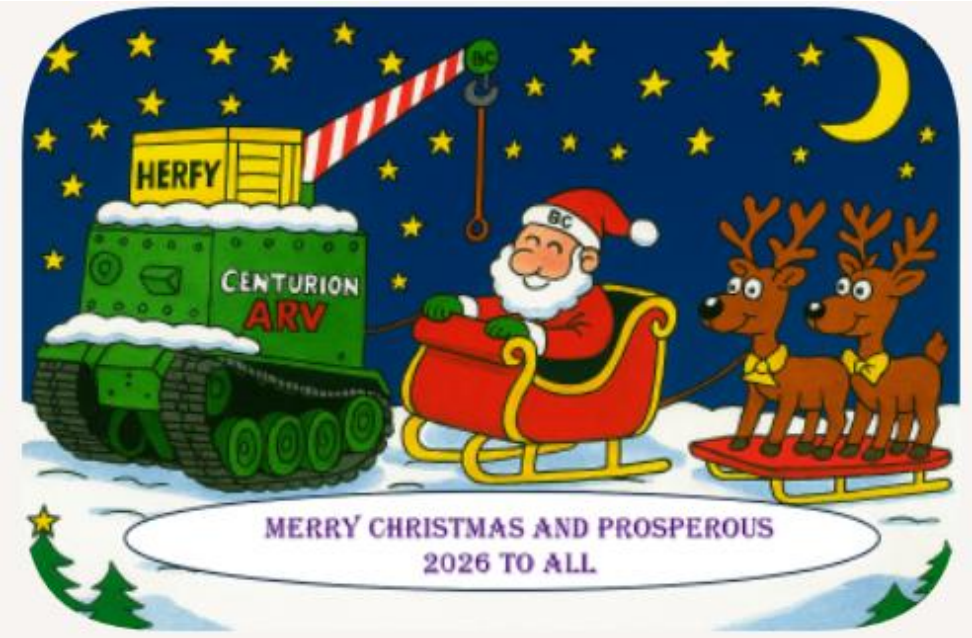
Corps Welfare Warrant Officer
kelvin.redshaw823@mod.gov.uk
07821 655636

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

## AND FINALLY

Well, what more can I say, as we approach the end of another year and may I add another successful year for the Branch. As a Branch we leave 2025 in good health, very successful events throughout the year, membership still climbing, (726 and counting), financially in a good place and been able to give some assistance to members. We haven't yet just managed to get where we would like to be with the Branch Website but be assured, we are working on it and hope that all comes together early in 2026.

Looking forward to 2026 we will of course hopefully have the same annual events, Overseas Trip, Winch to the Wall, Bow Shackle Ball, Remembrance Parade and an additional event which involves the Dutch Army as reported in the Newsletter Edition 17. This brings to me to the one area where we would love to see flourish a bit more. All the events that are held each year have similar numbers attend; we would love to see those numbers increase. If you have never attended any of the events you should give it some consideration, ask anyone who has attended the events, I am sure that should you decide to attend one or more of the events that you would be back for more.

Getting closer to that time of year again when people think more about those who are no longer with us, always a difficult time for families. The Branch over the last year has reported the loss of 8 members and I am sure that those of you who knew any of our lost colleagues, will over the festive season turn your thoughts to those families.

All that remains for me to do is thank all the membership and readers for your support throughout 2025, those of you who have given up time to assist the committee at various functions and of course the Branch President and Committee for their commitment, hard work and dedication to keeping the Recovery Mechanics Branch at the forefront of REME Association by yet again leading from the rear. Personally, my good lady and I are off on a 3-month jolly around Thailand, Singapore and Australia. The committee should not see this as 3 months of freedom as the internet is a great thing and I shall still show up at the monthly meetings – can't do enough for a good cause!