

The Bridge and District Branch of the British Legion may justly claim to be one of the most successful units in this great national organisation of ex-Service men. It is estimated that about 90 per cent. of the men in the area who have served in the Forces are members of the branch, whilst apart from furthering the specific objects of the Legion, a great deal is done to promote the welfare and happiness of the people in the district. A great part of the credit for the success of the branch must be given to Mr. S. Waghorn, the extremely able and energetic Hon. Secretary, who puts his whole heart into the work. Sir John Prestige, who succeeded the late Colonel the Hon. M. G. Talbot as President, takes a deep personal and active interest in the movement, and the branch has a most popular Chairman in Mr. H. B. Spanton. On Armistice Day and on other occasions the members always turn out in force to pay fitting homage to the old comrades who fell in the war, and the branch is to be represented at the forthcoming Rally on June 2 at Preston Hall, which will be attended by the Prince of Wales.

The branch may be said to be almost the mainspring of the social life of the district. Entertainments, social evenings, and treats of various kinds are organised, all of which provide keen enjoyment, and the dinner which is held by the Legion every year is a memorable event.

Seaman and Farmer

Mr. H. B. Spanton, the Chairman of the branch, is a typical representative of the agricultural life of the county. The family originally belonged to Spaunton, near Pickering, in Yorkshire. Subsequently a branch of the Spantons migrated to Norfolk; in the later years of the 18th century Mr.

William Spanton came to Canterbury, and in 1792 married a Miss Farley, daughter of a builder in the city. Since that time the Spantons have been very prominent in the agricultural industry of East Kent. The late Mr. Harry Spanton, the father of the Chairman of the Bridge branch of the British Legion, who farmed for many years at Chislet Court, was not only extraordinarily popular and an exceptionally good farmer, but in face, figure and characteristics he was a perfect representative of John Bull. His younger son, Mr. Frank Spanton, still carries on Chislet Court.

Mr. H. B. Spanton, who farms some 400 acres at Lenhall Farm, Bishopsbourne, in his early years forsook agriculture for "the call of the sea." Educated at Sandwich School, after a period "on the farm" he qualified as a master mariner, and subsequently held a commission in the Royal Naval Reserve. When he received 13 years in the Mercantile Marine, Mr. Spanton retired in April, 1912, but was mobilised on April 22, 1915, for active duty in the Great War, serving on H.M.S. *Ark Royal* and H.M.S. *Empress* respectively. He was demobilised on October 2, 1919, and returned to his old occupation on the land. After being tenant of Howletts Farm from 1922 to 1926 he took Lenhall Farm, Bishopsbourne. He was married to Miss Edith Petham Church.