

# "SANDBAG"

## WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER

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### NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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**Next social events trip to Bournemouth 12th August  
and "Bring your own picnic" 19th August (see back page)**

### Passchendaele remembered

On 30<sup>th</sup> July the branch commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Battle of Passchendaele with a Service of Remembrance around the War Memorial in the Memorial Hall grounds. Also at the same event a tree was dedicated which was grown from acorns collected at the high ground of Passchendaele Ridge by Tony Goddard. The ceremony was led by the chaplain to 1 Regiment Army Air Corps, The Revd. Peter Dixon and supported by an Honour Guard from the Regiment. A plaque has been made recording the event and will be mounted at the tree in the near future which will now be known as "The Passchendaele Tree".

The emphasis of the commemoration was focused on the young people of the town and representatives from King Arthur's School, The Scouts and Sea Cadets read details of the four soldiers from Wincanton, Harry Coombe, Gerald Cronin, Reginald Hill and Charles Mullins who were killed during the 100 days of the Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the Third Battle of Ypres) – all of whom have no known graves. Young members of the Wincanton Youth Theatre sang soldiers songs of the First World War prior to the ceremony and closed the event with a very moving rendition of "Keep the home fires burning" - a sad nostalgic song of the period.

The Mayor of Wincanton Councillor Howard Ellard gave the reading and Last Post and Reveille was sounded by a member of HMS Heron Band. Guest of Honour was Robert McDonald, chairman of the County of Somerset Royal British Legion. The event was very well supported by townspeople estimated to be around 150 people. (See centre page for more on this event.)





## Our youth on Passchendaele Day

The focus of our Passchendaele commemoration was on the youth and we were very pleased that they indeed fully took part. The photo (left) shows Daisy Legg laying a wreath at the Passchendaele Tree during the ceremony. Her brother Harry also read one of the stories of our soldiers killed at the Battle of Passchendaele. Both Harry and Daisy represented King Arthur's School.

2nd Templecombe Scouts were represented by Will Pullen, who read for us a short story of Reginald Hill, one of our soldiers killed in the battle. We are extremely pleased for the help we have received from Templecombe Scouts recently, especially for organising the barbecue at Armed Forces Day which went down very well (literally). We also believe the Scouts will parade with us on Remembrance Sunday this year. As you know Templecombe falls with our area of "Wincanton and District".



Our very long standing relationship with TS Mantle VC Sea Cadets was evident at the ceremony when Cadet Georgina Vincent read the story of one of our soldiers Harry Coombe and Cadet Tyler Snowden read the story of Gerald Cronin. Both soldiers were killed in action at Passchendaele. We greatly appreciate the constant support we get from TS Mantle VC cadets.

Harry Legg (Daisy's brother) read us the story of Charles Mullins. We are very pleased to have had King Arthur's School represented again this year and grateful to Harry and Daisy for their excellent help with this ceremony.



The Wincanton Youth Theatre group gave a wonderful presentation of World War One soldiers songs to open the event including "Tipperary" and "Pack up your troubles". But I think we all will remember the evocative rendition "Keep the home fires burning" to close the ceremony which was very memorable and moving. I am pleased to say they will be joining us again in December for the Carol concert (see opposite page) and we do hope the young people will join us at Remembrance time.

I will actually be in Ypres during October within days of the actual 100th anniversaries of the deaths of Gerald Cronin and Reginald Hill. Both are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at Tyne Cot Cemetery on Passchendaele Ridge. Charles Mullins and Harry Coombe who were killed in early stages of the battle in August and September 1917 are both commemorated on the Menin Gate. I will ensure a branch wreath is placed at both Passchendaele and the Menin Gate to them.



### **Mollie Chapman's GCSE art work.**

On 11th November 2015 Mollie Chapman played Last Post for us at the War Memorial on the tenor horn and we were very impressed with her talent. Not only is she an accomplished musician but for her GCSE art exam she submitted the "Poppies in the forest" painting, which frankly is absolutely amazing. Well done Mollie, we are confident you will pass your exam with such a work of art. You will also remember that at Remembrance last year Mollie's brother Dan played for us Last Post on the cornet - obviously both very talented young people.



### **Date for your diary**

You will remember I am sure that last year we held a very successful joint Christmas Carol event with Wincanton Live at Home. At the event were Wincanton Choir, Wincanton Youth Theatre and a group from Wincanton Silver Band. Although we are only in the very early stages of organising the event again with Live at Home, I can tell you that the date is booked at the Memorial Hall for 9th December. By our next Sandbag there will be more firm details.

### **Our continued support for Poppy Appeal from Canada**

Again this year our Poppy Appeal is supported by the 48th Highlanders of Canada, each year for the past few years on my autumn visit to France and Belgium I take over the wreaths for memorials to Regiment there. We always receive a prompt donation which goes to our Poppy Appeal. I noted this very iconic photo of the 48th, who were part of the 15th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force, marching out of Germany on the road between Esbach and Bensberg on 8 January 1919 and ultimately home. I think it noteworthy that they paraded with the Union Flag and when I receive photos of the Remembrance parades in Toronto they always parade the Canadian Flag and the Union Flag to this day.

During the Great War 1914-1918, 1,467 officers and men died while serving in the 15th Battalion and they are buried in 205 cemeteries in Europe and Canada. Those Fallen whose remains were never recovered are memorialized on the Vimy Memorial and the Menin Gate and eight individual memorials throughout France and Belgium - hence the wreaths I deliver.



### **Bring your own picnic 19th August**

Our summer picnic is on 19th August starting at 3 p.m. in the grounds of the Memorial Hall if the weather is kind and in the Sun Lounge if not ! The idea is that members bring their own picnic to eat and a bottle of wine or other drinks and just have a nice summer social get together. The venue is hired until 7 p.m. the event is at no charge for this.

### **September coach trip to Lulworth Cove & Swanage Date changed to 9th September**

I have had to change the date of our trip to Lulworth Cove and Swanage to 9th September, I am sorry if this causes any inconvenience but unfortunately it is unavoidable. Departure will be 8.30 a.m. to enable plenty of time at both locations. We should arrive at Lulworth Cove before 10.30 a.m. enabling time for coffee and sightseeing and then go on to Swanage for lunch. We can decide between ourselves on the day what time we leave Lulworth Cove but it probably would be around 12 noon to 12.30 p.m. Then on to Swanage for the remainder of the day. Cost as usual is £12 each adult.

### **Trip to the Royal Mint at Cardiff**

I always try to get a special trip arranged for us each year and we had the Houses of Parliament trip this year which will be hard to beat. As I still wish to keep trips to £12 each (which we will continue to do) these special trips always budget out at over the £12 because of the coach cost, so I must ensure that there will be enough people make the trip viable and not drain the social funds which are limited - they are not RBL charity money. Without final obligation, could you please let me know if in principal you would be interested in visiting the Royal Mint in Cardiff as our first trip in the spring of next year. Entrance to the Royal Mint costs £13.50 for adults 16+, £11 children and £12 for seniors. If we get a group together there is a £1 reduction on each ticket. (coach costs £12 on top as usual) Please let me know by phone or email if you think you would like to go.

### **Branch Dinner Friday 6th October**

Our Branch Dinner is on Friday 6th October at the Millers Inn. The event starts for drinks at 7 p.m. and dinner served at 7.30 p.m. The venue is limited in space to 40 people so please book as early as possible. Unfortunately we found previously that it is almost impossible to go for a larger venue as, for example, the Memorial Hall Sun Lounge holds a similar amount and the main hall is too large. Other venues seem to require a commitment larger than 40 and we could not guarantee to fulfil this. Details are as follows:-

Complimentary sherry on arrival

Main choice of one:

Roast Turkey,

Roast Beef,

Country Vegetable Nut Roast

Served with a selection of vegetable, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding and gravy.

Dessert choice of one:

Chocolate profiteroles with warm chocolate sauce,

Apple crumble with custard,

Raspberry pavlova.

Followed with coffee or tea and mints.

£15 per person

Transport can be arranged if you wish.

Please let me know your meal selection as soon as possible.

### **Bournemouth trip 12th August**

There are still places to Bournemouth on **Saturday 12th August**, please let me know if you would like to go.

### **Great Pilgrimage to Ypres 2018**

At the AGM in June we voted to send representatives of Wincanton branch to the Great Pilgrimage in Ypres in August next year. RBL HQ suggests that we the branch help fund the £1000 required which we agreed to pay half and fundraise for this amount. Terry Williams our standard bearer has agreed to be there with our branch standard and Martin Holmes will be our community representative, both will pay the remaining half between them. As more details emerge I will update everyone. It will be an experience of a lifetime for Terry and Martin and as you have read in the national Legion magazine it will be a spectacular event.