100th Anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War

Bourne Veterans Way

To mark the 100th anniversary of the onset of World War I, the Trustees of Bourne United Charities (BUC) have installed a ‘Veterans Way’ of 22 memorial stones leading to the War Memorial in the Memorial Gardens at Bourne. The stones each represent one of the regiments and services in which the 43 men from Bourne fought and died in WWI.

The BUC held a Service on Sunday 21 September 2014 to dedicate the stones. The Service was preceded by a Parade of Standards to the War Memorial and was attended by serving and former personnel from all three Services as well as many civilians. School children from Bourne Abbey and Bourne Westfield schools each laid a wreath on a cross behind each stone.

The stones commemorate the following Regiments and Services:

- Royal Lincolnshire Regiment
- Royal Navy
- Royal Warwickshires
- Northamptonshires
- Prince of Wales Own
- Parachute Regiment
- Royal British Legion
- The Loyal Regiment
- Royal Armoured Corps
- South Staffordshires
- Royal Air Force
- Machine Gun Corps
- Northumberland Fusiliers
- Kings Own Royal Lancaster
- Notts & Derby Regiment
- Middlesex
- Hampshire, Labour Corps
- Norfolk Regiment
- Royal Artillery
- The King’s Royal Rifle Corps

In August 1914 the British Empire, its dominions, and its colonies issued an ultimatum to Germany to withdraw its armed forces from Belgium. On 4 August 2014, during an equally hot summer, the people of the United Kingdom came together to commemorate its declaration of war on Germany, exactly hundred years before. The events ranged such huge commemorations as the Poppies in the Tower to village fund-raising fetes, the lighting of beacons, and researching local war memorials, displays of art, artefacts and memorabilia of the period. This Special Edition of Legion Lincs sets out some of events which took place in Lincolnshire then and earlier in the year.

S.R.Bonde, Editor
Earlier WWI Events
Lincolnshire’s programme of events to commemorate the outbreak of WWI a hundred years ago did not begin on 4 August. As already reported in *Legion Lincs* edition of May/June 2012, many of the County’s Branches had already made their mark, as shown here:

School and youth organisation in Kirton scattering poppy seeds during the Spring.

Tony Goodwin, County Chairman and his wife, Jan, joined Pinchbeck for a Flower Display and poetry reading around a local family of eight sons

The Mayor of Spilsby and the President of Fresnay sur Sarthe in France plant a *Memorial Tree* in Spilsby in May.

Several Stamford primary schools hosted workshops:

making poppies in the classrooms;

talking to volunteers about their collections of World War I artefacts and memorabilia;

The replica trench dug in May as part of Immingham’s ‘In Bloom’ display this year.

and hearing a ‘Tommy’ talk about life in the trenches and seeing his uniform and equipment.
Barnack
Barnack & District Royal British Legion commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War at a candlelit vigil at the village War Memorial at 1030-11pm in memory of the 39 men from Barnack, Souththorpe and Pilsgate who lost their lives in the conflict.
A bell tolled from the village church as over 150 villagers assembled in the darkness to take part in the service conducted by the Reverend David Maylor - Chaplain to the Branch.
Members read out a series of Reflections, Poems and Scriptures together with the singing of the soldiers’ hymn 'O Valiant Hearts' against a background of haunting contemporary 1914-18 music of the period.
Old Stamfordian Cameron Park played a medley of Pipe tunes and the traditional 'Flowers of the Forest' For The Fallen and the proceedings finished with the reading of Lord Grey's famous statement 'The lights are going out all over Europe …' and a salvo of rockets symbolising the outbreak of hostilities and the terrible carnage to follow. The piper then led the congregation down to the Millstone Inn for a well earned nightcap!

Epworth Centenary Week
Epworth Branch commemorated the WWI Centenary with a whole week of events:

Friday, 1 August - Lighting of Epworth Beacon at 9.00pm

Saturday, 2 August - 'Epworth Remembers' at the Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, School room- A two-week Audio-visual display of art, photos, memorabilia and poetry etc. with WW1 influence.

Sunday, 3 August - St. Andrews Church Service of Commemoration of Memorial Book

Monday, 4 August – Lights out, Last Post Commemoration and 2 minutes silence in Market Square Epworth

Centenary ‘Lights Out’ Project
Under this project the Legion, in collaboration with Marks & Spencer, encouraged everyone in the UK to turn off their lights between 10pm and 11pm on 4 August 2014 – leaving only a single light or candle for this symbolic act of reflection and hope. More details are on: http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/ww1-centenary/lights-out.
The Legion is now trying to establish whether any branches are holding special Centenary commemorations of this nature to honor the anniversary which we might be able to use as examples in our PR work.
If your Branch has held an event involving 'Lights Out', could they please inform Ellie Rance, PR Officer (Midlands) on telephone: 0333 011 4189 or e-mail: errance@britishlegion.org.uk, or postal: PO Box 16802, Birmingham, B2 2QL. Please also copy to the County Secretary.
Stamford Commemorate the start of the First World War

As in other communities up and down the country, Stamford Town Council, Stamford RBL and local arts and culture promoters, Art Pop-Up, and other volunteers came together to commemorate the centenary of the declaration of war by Great Britain on Germany and Austria at the start of the First World War. The focus was on the impact of the War on Stamford and the local area and community, beginning with Stage 1 looking at the events of 1914. This took a fourfold approach

- research of local School, government, and newspaper and similar archives, and a series of roadshows to encourage the local community to share their artefacts, photos, documents and other mementoes relating to their families’ experiences of the period, as well as family tales. The ultimate aim is to create a digital research base and to collate a Commemorative Book over the next four years to provide a long-lasting record of this important period.
- an education programme, based on the research findings, to create, with local schools and social groups, an exhibition and programme of events in Browne’s Hospital from 12 July to 4 August;
- and a Festival of Commemoration in Broad Street on 4 August itself.

Exhibition and Events Programme

For four weeks in July the Board Room at Browne’s Hospital in Broad Street, Stamford was transformed by local artist Sue Shields into a temporary event space for a series of free events to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Using local schoolchildren and over 300 sandbags, timber, and real barbed wire, the Board Room became an intimate trench-inspired event space playing host to a wide range of free events and activities this summer from 12 July to 4 August.

A major aim of the event was to explain to local children what the conflict meant to local servicemen and the community in 1914. Parties of school children visited the exhibition every morning when they met Stamford residents who showed them their displays of mementoes, artefacts and other family treasures of the period and explained what they meant to them and to the soldiers at the front. The children themselves then created poppies, letters, and drawings in their schools and fastened them to the ‘trench’ walls in the way the soldiers themselves would have displayed them.

The event opened with a Preview Reception on 12 July of local, County and military dignitaries and was followed by a full programme of poetry, drama, talks, and music by local groups and artists. The performances included a medley of WWI songs by the Belvoir Wassailers Male Voice Choir, the Intermezzo String Quarter playing a selection of Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Butterworth and related composers of the Great War period, scenes from a new work “The Mudhook Gunners” based on the war experiences of local author Alan Mott’s family, “Songs and The Music Hall of the Great War Era” performed and discussed by Gary and Sheila Frisby, and talks on many aspects of how the war impacted on Stamford and the community.
Stamford Festival of Commemoration

The Festival of Commemoration on 4 August continued the theme, starting with a civic procession of two pipers of the Peterborough Highland Pipe Band leading Cllr Clem Walden, Mayor of Stamford and his Mayoress, members of the Town Council, re-enactors in WWI dress, and members of the Stamford ACF and ATC from St John’s Church to the event site in Broad Street. This was followed by an hour of family-orientated singing by the Stamford Joint Schools Choir and a reading by the Town Crier of the Declaration of War in 1914. We were then treated to a display of military drill by the ACF/ATC and a medley of songs of the period.

Stamford Brass then led the second half, again with music of the period, followed by a selection of verse ‘For King & Country’ by Stamford’s Poet Laureate and others, a selection of trench and war songs by the Half Cut Theatre, drama and dance by the INK Theatre, the Lindsey Jenkins Dance Group, and Jed Jaggard, leading to a magnificent climax by the Stamford Choral Society of Elgar’s ‘Spirit of England’ and the dip of the Union flag and assembled Standards as they sang ‘They shall grow not old …’.

Earlier the ladies of the Stamford Flower Arrangement Society had decorated the War Memorial with a display of field flowers and wheat intertwined with symbolic barbed wire. Throughout the Festival members of the public, led by the Town Mayor and Mayoress, were invited to light a candle each to place on the Memorial. Later we extinguished the candles at 11.00pm, the exact hour at which the original ultimatum to Germany had expired.

Dozens of people and groups collaborated to create this very successful commemoration. It is impossible to thank them all by name but a few must be singled out – the Trustees of Browne’s Hospital, Steve Barker for his magnificent logistical support throughout, Gary Barlow for setting up the sound system, Darren Rawnsley for his creative inspiration and impresario talents, Cllr Max Sawyer for all his work, especially on the research and liaison with the Town Hall, all the Standard Bearers and the Cadets, the stewards who put in so many long, hot hours, and above all, Sam Roddan, overall Programme Director without whose tenacity, inspiration, organisational skills, eye for detail, and artistic flare none of this could have happened. Thank you to everyone.
Ruskingtom remembers
With the help of the vicar, Sara Davies arranged for All Saints Church, Ruskington to hold an evening Service on Monday 4 August to commemorate the centenary of the start of World War One. The Service included readings, psalms and prayers as well as a roll call to remember the 33 men associated with the village who died. The church was also open over the weekend 2 - 3 August for prayer and reflection, with a reading of poems and prayers, a retiring collection in aid of the Royal British Legion, and a collection to pay for floral tributes. She also collected some information about the men from the village who served. Network Rail who, wanting to return something to the village following recent disruptions, also paid for the cleaning of the village War Memorial.

‘Grantham Remembers’
‘Grantham Remembers’ is the name given to a two week exhibition starting on 1 November and two concerts which will take place on Saturday, 15 November, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

The concerts, one in the afternoon and another in the evening, in St John’s Church, Spitalgate will feature the choir and also traditional music and songs from the Great War. The Belvoir Wassailers will take part together with local folk groups and soloists. Poetry and prose will be read during the concerts. Entry will be free, but special commemorative booklets will be on sale and proceeds will go to the Royal British Legion and Friends of St John’s Church. The Legion will also be selling poppies.

The exhibition will also take place in St John’s Church. It will be a combination of the history of the war in general and a focus on local history. Local historian Malcolm Knapp will give two talks in the church - on 1 November about “Bygone Grantham, World War 1”, and on 8 November about his visits to the Somme and Ypres.

One of the event organisers said: “This will commemorate not only the Machine Gun Corps at Belton, but also the Royal Flying Corps, which played such a vital role in the war and whose pilots were trained in Grantham and Harlaxton. Representatives from the Armed Forces will be invited with the community and dignitaries.” Schools will also be invited to the exhibition and classes will be able to visit as part of their curriculum and it is envisaged pupils will be able to take part in a number of activities. There will also be a focus on local people who played an important role during the war including the first policewoman Edith Smith, and Alfred Ball, a pupil of King’s School who won a Victoria Cross.

Tickets will be available from the Guildhall Arts Centre box office and the library on a first come, first served basis. For more details on the associated education programme on 07828 039628.

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In brief...

Wellingore & Navenby Branch hosted a meeting at the Venue, Navenby on 9 September at which two Professional Guest Speakers discussed:- Lincoln’s role in the development of early WW1 Tanks; and “The War over the Trenches” (the RFC and RAF’s support to the army in WW1)

Swineshead Branch held a First World War Centenary Concert in St Mary’s Church on 15 August. The concert included words and music, provided by the Swineshead Silver Band, a raffle and refreshments.

Spilsby & District Branch have produced a plaque, to be affixed to the wall in the Franklin Hall, to commemorate the start of the First World War. There will be a small ceremony of unveiling, date to be announced.

Mr Raymond Glynn-Owen has also unearthed a plaque from the storeroom of Spilsby Town Hall stating that during WW1 the building was used as a hospital. This plaque will be refurbished and also re- there.

Skegness Branch commemorated the centenary of WWI on 3 August with a Service of Remembrance and Dedication in the Tower Gardens to honour individually the sacrifice made by those from the area who lost their lives in the conflict. They also aimed to remind the public that the role of the Royal British Legion – to be the provider of welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance for the whole Armed Forces community – remains as vital now as it was following the First World War.

Addlethorpe, near Skegness, held a Service of Commemoration of the outbreak of World War One at St Nicholas Church on Sunday, 3 August. There was also a display of flowers, visiting bell-ringers, stalls and refreshments.