

The Friends of St. George's Memorial Church, Ypres

Summer 2017 Newsletter



Peter Burgess playing The Last Post at the Thiepval Memorial during The Friends 2017 Pilgrimage

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Chairman's Report

The first half of 2017 has seen a number of positive developments involving The Friends. First among these has been the long awaited launch of the Website in June, which is the result of much tireless work on the part of the Secretary, Mike McKeon. It embraces both the Church and The Friends, with the aim of attracting more visitors to St George's and new members to The Friends. It is of course intended that the contents from both Parties are updated on a regular basis. This is a game changer, and I therefore encourage all our current members to circulate the address, stgeorgesmemorialchurchypres.com, to as wide an audience as possible, thereby giving Eve Speare, our diligent and hardworking Membership Secretary, the opportunity to make full use of her new computer !

We give a warm welcome to the Rev Gillian Trinder, who took up the appointment of Chaplain at St George's on the 1st of July. Her experience, both of working with military families, and also as a teacher, will be of great benefit to the St George's Community. May her ministry in Ypres be long, happy and rewarding. St George's has bidden farewell to the Rev Pete Wright who nobly gave spiritual guidance during the interregnum, and who, with his wife, Penny, has returned to California.

In early April, following a prior period of training, a team of four postgraduate students, representing **Gateways to the First World War**, at the University of Kent, accompanied by Professor Mark Connolly, set out for Ypres to commence a trial project on behalf of The Friends. The aim of the project was to raise the profile of St George's, by acting as on-site stewards, providing visitors with a deeper knowledge of the history and meaning of the Building and its fabric. This was to be supplemented by free guided tours of the City, in which sites familiar to the original generation of visitors and pilgrims in the 1920's and 1930's were pointed out, thus helping to focus on the unique significance of St George's.

The project was undoubtedly successful, and discussions are ongoing for it to continue in the future. A team was also present in Flanders at the Passchendaele Centenary Commemorations, participating mainly under the auspices of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. No mean thanks must be due to Derek Gallagher, the Vice-Chairman, and Mark Connolly, for devising and masterminding the programme.

For a long time there was a doubt as to whether this year's Pilgrimage would take place, after last year's cancellation. However, thanks to the determination of Nigel Divers and Beryl Burgess, a group of 20 departed from Dover at the end of April. As always, everything was immaculately organised by Nigel and Beryl, with great support from members of their respective families. We all learnt and enjoyed much over the five days. An innovation was introduced, whereby, on occasions, a short presentation on an individual grave was given by those with a connection. These proved to be very informative and added to the feeling of remembrance. Thanks should go to those who went to the trouble of preparing the presentations, and of course to Nigel and Beryl for all their work. It is important that we have more takers. We really need at least 25, and this is where I hope that the Website will come into its own.

Derek Gallagher, Mike McKeon and myself attended the recent Passchendaele Centenary Commemorations, and while acting as stewards in St George's, had the pleasure of meeting many relatives of those who fought in the Battle, together with dignitaries of the City.

The arrival of the peal of bells which has been cast at Loughborough for St George's is imminent. On 31st August the bells will be transported to the Church on two lorries that saw service during the Great War, where they will be dedicated on the floor. There will be a further Service of Dedication, in the Church Tower, on Sunday 22nd October, at which the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe will officiate.

There have been a few changes to the Committee. Michael Derriman stood down after last year's AGM, after many years exemplary service. We have also said farewell to Malcolm Brown and Yvonne Twyman, who for many years has gallantly typed the Minutes for successive Chairmen. In her place we welcome Sally Moger.

It is with great sadness that I end my Report with news of the death of the Rt Rev Geoffrey Rowell, who was the immediate past Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, from 2001-2013.

Edward Crofton
Chairman



The Rev. Pete Wright and his wife Penny, flanked by Sir Edward Crofton (right) and Derek Gallagher (left) in the gardens of St. George's during The Friends Pilgrimage 2017

Chaplain's Letter

Greetings to you all !

I'm pleased to introduce myself as the new Chaplain of St George's. My home town is Harrogate in North Yorkshire, which is renowned for Betty's tearooms.

I worked for 12 years as a teacher, which included five years working on a British Forces Army camp in Germany. I then trained for ordained ministry at Westcott House in Cambridge and completed my curacy in Bury St Edmund's.

My particular interests in parish ministry include pastoral care, designing creative worship services, and teaching courses. My hobbies include travelling abroad to visit places of historical and cultural interest, and so I am keen to explore the beautiful towns of Flanders. I enjoy going to see plays and musicals at the theatre, visiting art galleries and watching historical films. I also have a particular interest in writing articles on spiritual themes. Having taken up my appointment in early July, I am very much looking forward to the opportunities of ministry in Ypres and the diocese of Europe and getting to know and working with the congregation and Friends of St George's.

Blessings and Prayers,
Rev'd Gillian Trinder.



This photograph shows me preparing to conduct a summer service of Evensong in the beautiful village church of Wordwell in Suffolk prior to my arrival in Flanders.

Pilgrimage to Ieper

Twenty of the Friends took part in the annual pilgrimage to St George's Church, the Ypres Salient and the Somme over the May Day Bank Holiday. The Pilgrimage supports the church, shows fellowship to its members and enables the Friends to visit war graves, memorials and other sites with special, often family, meaning for them.

As usual, the Pilgrimage was spread over five days based in Ieper but with a day visit to the Somme. Whilst all Commonwealth war cemeteries and memorials are superbly maintained and share common design features they nevertheless vary incredibly in size and character; something which our varied itinerary allowed us to appreciate. At one end of scale is the huge Poelcapelle British Cemetery with its thousands of graves gathered together in this concentration cemetery after the war. The soldiers here were brought in from many small battlefield cemeteries or from the shell holes, ditches and fields where they had fallen without proper burial. The graves at Poelcapelle are laid out in long ordered rows and columns like many battalions drawn up on the parade ground. Sadly the majority of the soldiers here are unknown and bear inscriptions such as, "a soldier of the Great War" or "a corporal of the Royal Berkshire Regiment". In complete contrast there are the small battlefield cemeteries such as the tiny Le Fermont near the Somme village of Riviere. Le Fermont contains barely a couple of dozen graves and is situated in a narrow tree-lined lane opposite a wide babbling stream.

Our visits to graves and memorials were given added poignancy and meaning by the sounding of the Last Post and recitation of the Exhortation by Pete and Kim Burgess respectively. We feel that this is a special mark of our respect and we are very grateful to Pete and Kim.

The names of the thousands of unknown soldiers of the Ypres Salient are recorded on the Menin Gate and at Tyne Cot, both of which we visited. We attended the sounding of the Last Post at the Menin Gate on Sunday when we also laid two wreaths; one on behalf the Friends and one for the Royal West Kent Regiment (the regiment in which the grandfather of one our group served).



Sir Edward Crofton flanked by Richard Divers (left) and Stephen Divers (right), in preparation to lay a reef on behalf of The Friends at the Menin Gate during the 2017 Pilgrimage

The Pilgrimage itself began at Dover where we took the ferry to Calais. On the way to Ieper we stopped at Dozinghem Military Cemetery set in the woods near St Sixtus Abbey north of Poperinge. This cemetery was established in 1917 to serve three casualty clearing stations receiving wounded from the Third Battle of Ypres (Paschendaele) . We visited the grave of Capt Wilfred Dashwood of 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards who died on 2 August 1917. His brother, also a captain, served in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and was killed in action in Plugstreet woods in May 1915. He is buried there in Rifle House Cemetery and we visited his grave later in the Pilgrimage.

On the following day travelled to the Somme visiting twelve cemeteries and memorials;

Vimy Ridge

Le Fermont

18th Division Memorial at Thiepval. This distinguished division was formed

from volunteers from the east and south east of England, including the grandfather of one of our number.

Thiepval Memorial to the Missing

Highland Light Infantry Memorial at Authuille church. This has special meaning for Pete and Kim Burgess, members of the Boys Brigade, as the 16th Battalion was formed in Glasgow from BB members.

Pozières British Memorial. Here we visited the memorial to Lance Corporal Edmund Wale of the Royal Berkshire Regiment who was killed in action in 1918 near Hangard Wood during the April retreat. His body was never identified. Edmund was the organiser's great uncle.

Guillemont Road Cemetery. Here we visited the grave of Alfred Divers of The Buffs, a cousin of the organiser's grandfather. Alfred came from Stelling Minnis in Kent and died on 15 September 1916, the first day that tanks went into action. The Buffs' objective was a strongpoint known as the "Quadrilateral". Unfortunately their single supporting tank failed on the day and Alfred was one of many infantrymen to be killed.

Delville Wood South African National Memorial

Guards Cemetery, Les Bouefs

Gordon Cemetery, Mametz

Dantzig Alley British Cemetery

Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt



Sir Edward Crofton laying a wreath at the Guards Cemetery, Les Bouefs

Lunch was taken at the Ocean Villas Tea Rooms at Auchonvillers. This former farm was a stretcher bearers post during the war.

On Sunday we attended morning service in St George's Church led by Father Peter Wright (the locum Chaplain), followed by lunch with members of the church in the church hall. That afternoon we visited **Westhof Farm Cemetery** in the hilly country, south of Ieper. We moved on to the aptly named **Woods Cemetery** which stands in woodland closer to Ieper. Here we visited the grave of Richard Howard of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. He was a musician and violin maker from Leeds. When he departed for the war he left behind the parts for a fiddle which he had not had time to assemble. Howard died in the Battle of Messines in 1917. 90 years later the fiddle came to light and was completed. Sam Sweeney, fiddle player with the group Bellowhead bought the fiddle and researched its story. This inspired him to create a show in tribute to Richard Howard and his fiddle. Returning to Ieper we visited **Essex Farm Cemetery**, famous for the Canadian dressing station where John McCrae wrote the poem "In Flanders Fields". That evening we attended the Last Post at the Menin Gate where Edward Crofton, our Chairman, escorted by Richard and Stephen Divers laid wreaths on our behalf.

On Monday morning we walked through Plugstreet Woods from **Prowse Point Cemetery** and the adjacent memorial to the Christmas Day 1914 football match to Rifle House, visiting **Mud Corner, Toronto Avenue and Ploegsteert Wood cemeteries** on the way. Today the woods are an attractive place alive with birdsong, flowers and red squirrels. Rifle House and Ploegsteert cemeteries are set in woodland glades, a huge contrast to the shattered trees and swampy land of the war where it was so wet that trenches could not be dug. The final visit of the morning was to nearby **Chester Farm** and the grave of Lieutenant Ernest Carlos of The Buffs. Carlos was a distinguished artist and friend of Robert Baden Powell and worked closely with him to establish the Boy Scouts; the visit was at the request of members of the Scouts.

Monday afternoon saw visits to **Tyne Cot** (the largest British cemetery in the world with 11908 graves) and **Poelcapelle British Cemetery** where several pilgrims visited relatives' graves and memorials. The last visit of the day was to the **Black Watch Memorial** at the request of Joe Hubble who served with the regiment in later years.

That evening we had dinner together in a restaurant appropriately situated in the casemates set in Ieper's city wall. It was here in these casemates that the

famous wartime humorous and satirical magazine "The Wipers Times" was printed.

We returned to Calais and the UK on Tuesday visiting **Godwaersvelde Cemetery** on the way. This rural cemetery is just across the Belgian border in French Flanders.

The examples above give a flavour of the many and varied reasons for our visits which are suggested by the pilgrims. Each visit has its own story and with our own last post ceremonies they make our Pilgrimage very special.

It is hoped that we will hold another Pilgrimage in April or May 2018 and details will be published later. The Pilgrimage normally runs from Friday to Tuesday in April or May, starting and finishing in Dover. Travel is by coach crossing the Channel by ferry to Calais. Hotel accommodation is in the centre of Ieper. Participants are asked to suggest visits and so far as possible these are incorporated in the itinerary giving priority to those with a family or regimental connection, subject of course to matters such as access, position and the time available. We always attend St George's church and the Menin Gate on Sunday.

The Pilgrimage has been held for many years with only a few breaks, but is dependent upon there being sufficient participants to make it financially viable at a reasonable cost. Some people are regular participants, whilst others come only once or twice, but the Pilgrimage is renowned for being a happy and welcoming group. Those of you who have not attended have missed a special experience.

As organiser of the Pilgrimage, I should like to thank the small group of people who have helped and supported me. First of all there is Beryl Burgess who handles all our money and organizes the coach and ferry. Then there are Pete Burgess who plays the Last Post for us and Kim Burgess who delivers the Exhortation and who both provide invaluable support in many ways during the trip. Last but not least I should like to thank my sons, Stephen and Richard who gave their help in so many ways before and during the event.

Nigel Divers,
Pilgrimage Organiser



The Friends Pilgrims 2017 at Poelcapelle Cemetery



*The Friends Pilgrimage Organisers
Kim Burgess, Pete Burgess, Richard Divers, Nigel Divers, Beryl Burgess and Stephen Burgess*

Editors Note: In his letter, the Chairman mentions the poignancy of presentations regularly given beside individual graves. Sometimes they were as a result of long and dedicated research and sometimes they had a specific family connection. Here are two examples ...

The Pilgrims' Progress _____

In 1620, the voyage of “The Mayflower”, taking the Pilgrim Fathers to the New World and away from the persecution of Jacobean England was undoubtedly a voyage of discovery. Those travelling almost 400 years later on the 2017 Pilgrimage of the Friends of St George’s Memorial Church were far more certain of the attributes of their intended destination but the trip would still prove, at least for the writers, another voyage of discovery . . .

What, then, is a “Pilgrimage”? Whilst many of our travellers had requested personal visits to the graves of fallen ancestors, we chose to select four cemeteries of particular interest to ourselves, which would enable us to honour men discovered during many years of research into the heroism displayed during the War. Whilst in no way wishing to detract from the personal element of the tour, it is also important to acknowledge that each individual cemetery has its own history and reason for existing. Likewise those who lie within will have their individual stories too.

As newcomers to the Pilgrimage we received a warm and friendly welcome from our fellow travellers and our confidence in a successful return to the battlefields grew as a consequence. Following a pleasant crossing across the Channel, the series of pre-requested personal visits soon commenced en route to Ypres. In the following days, over 20 cemeteries and three memorials, situated from the Ypres Salient down to the battlefields of The Somme, formed a challenging programme of commemorations, each concluding with the emotive sounding of “The Last Post” and the recitation of “The Exhortation”. When opportunity arose to share our own information with

fellow Pilgrims we were pleased to find that this was of interest and which hopefully added a further perspective and poignancy to our cemetery visits.

Below we present two of those stories extracted from our personal archives which were presented at the appropriate cemeteries (Westhof Farm and Woods Cemetery) to the other pilgrims. We very much hope to join The Friends again in 2018 and beyond . . .

CAPTAIN ARTHUR RONALD BACKUS

With daylight movement around trenches fraught with danger, the darkness of night saw a hive of activity, including repeated attempts to gain information on enemy positions by groups of men venturing out towards the enemy lines “on patrol”. On the night of 23rd November 1915, from trenches near the hamlet of La Brique, one such venture was disrupted by German fire, which left the participating Officer, Captain Henry Tryon, 8th Battalion, Rifle Brigade, wounded in the neck. Corporal Alfred Drake as N.C.O. assumed command. Then, realising Tryon was too badly injured to be moved, Drake ordered his comrades to return to safety before he knelt beside his Officer to bandage his wounds as the enemy continued to fire upon them.

A rescue party of two Officers, including Captain Arthur Ronald Backus, also of the 8th Rifle Brigade, and two men later crawled forward to rescue Lieutenant Tryon and Corporal Drake, an operation for which all four would be decorated for their gallantry. Tryon was found, unconscious but alive with his wounds neatly bandaged. Between him and the enemy lines was the bullet-riddled body of Corporal Drake, who had obviously shielded his Officer from further injury at the cost of his own life. Such sacrifice was worthy of the highest possible reward – and a posthumous Victoria Cross was later awarded. For his role in the episode, Captain Backus was awarded the Military Cross.

Backus was born in Lima in Peru, but by the time of the War his parents resided in Bournemouth. Educated at Eton (where he made an impression as

an oarsmen) and later at Trinity College, Cambridge, Backus left for the Front in May 1915, where he was wounded on two separate occasions at both Ypres and The Somme.

On the evening of 21st September 1917, Captain Backus left his men to dine with the Officers of a neighbouring Battalion. Expected to return before midnight, his continued absence was explained when a Royal Artillery Gunner discovered the Captain lying face down, unconscious, on the road, with his bicycle in a nearby ditch. He died from his injuries around 2.45 a.m. the following morning. It was later established he had collided with the rear of a motor vehicle and that the absence of headlights, and the darkness of the night were major contributory factors to this unfortunate accident. Captain Backus is buried in Westhof Farm Cemetery, south-west of the village of Neuve Eglise and close to the Franco-Belgian border. This tiny cemetery, containing only 131 graves, is certainly one of the more remote burial sites behind the lines of the Ypres Salient. It does not have its own story to tell . . .



David Humberstone presenting the background story of Captain Arthur Ronald Backus to fellow Pilgrims

PRIVATE RICHARD HOWARD SPENCER

In 2009, professional fiddle player Sam Sweeney purchased a violin from an instrument shop in Oxford. Whilst it had the appearance of a new instrument, the label inside the violin gave a date of 1915, the name of Richard S. Howard and the notation “Violin No 6”. Intrigued, Sweeney, together with his father Chris, undertook research and established that the violin had been made, but never finished, by luthier (stringed instrument maker) and one-time music hall performer, one Richard Spencer Howard.

Howard was born in Leeds in 1882, working first as a stonemason and later as a musician. By the time he was 24 he had married Martha (née Rayton), their daughter, Rose, being born later that year, and Howard was working in one of the many Music Halls of his home city. It is assumed that this was the period in which he also began to make violins. In 1916, at the age of 35, Howard was conscripted into the Army, leaving the violin unfinished in his workshop. As a Private in the 10th Battalion, Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment, he was sent to fight in the infamous Ypres Salient and was killed in action as his Battalion advanced on the first day of the Battle of Messines on 7th June 1917.

Unfortunately the exact circumstances of his death remain unknown, despite the attack being well documented. One of seven Battalion fatalities incurred that day, Howard lies amongst his comrades at Woods Cemetery, close to and in clear sight of the spires of the city of Ypres.



The grave of Private Richard Howard Spencer in Woods Cemetery

After his widow and young daughter received confirmation of his death, the separate pieces of a violin were discovered, wrapped in manila paper, and given to young Rose as a memento of her father. Upon her death, the parts were sold at auction and bought by luthier Roger Claridge, who finally completed the violin's construction in 2007. Two years later, it was purchased by 25 year old Sam Sweeney, a member of English contemporary folk band Bellowhead.

Sweeney researched the human story behind the instrument and was so moved by what he discovered that he brought the violin to Howard's graveside at Woods Cemetery and played by his headstone for some two hours, a repertoire which included Howard's Regimental March and the Last Post. A series of special concerts, entitled Made in the Great War, a book and a website have all followed. Thanks to the efforts of one young musician, the story, and sacrifice, of one of his predecessors now receives the wider audience it deserves. One intriguing question remains. If Sweeney's violin is "No 6", are the other five still awaiting discovery?

Valerie Jacques and David Humberston

EVE SPEARE REPORTS ON A LIKELY FAMILY CONNECTION

There is a very strong likelihood that a grave in the Le Fermont Cemetery near Arras, is the grave of my Great Grandfather. this is the grave of my great grandfather. The War Graves Commission says there are only two graves with our spelling of Speare. I feel this one is likely to be my great grandfather's because of name factor. It is the grave of Samuel WILLIAM Speare, son of WILLIAM Speare and my father was Charles WILLIAM Speare. He was in the army for 28 years and I have his medals and those of his father so there is a strong history of military service in our family. I therefore find it moving to visit his grave and to pay my respects.

Eve Speare.



Eve Speare standing at the grave of Samuel Speare in Le Fermont Cemetery near Arras

Editor's note: During the Autumn of 2016 plans were made to prepare the exciting prospect of a pilot scheme which would allow a group of Kent University students to have a permanent presence in St George's Church during the Easter period 2017. What follows is a summary of the outcome of that visit. Reporting on the outcome is the Organiser of the Project from the University of Kent perspective, Professor Mark Connelly.

The St George's Student Project 2017 _____

On Friday 7 April, a team of four postgraduate students from the University of Kent – Amy Harrison (MA), Hannah Kearns (MA), Natasha Silk (PhD), and Edward Tesei (MA) – led by Tim Godden (PhD), and accompanied by Professor Mark Connelly, set out for Ieper to commence a trial project on behalf of, and, in collaboration with, the Friends of St George's Church and St George's Memorial Church itself.

Aimed at improving knowledge of the Church and its rich history, the plan was for the students to act as stewards of the church interpreting its history and fabric for visitors, as well as offering them the opportunity of a free guided tour around Ieper to help place the church in context. Expertly prepared for their role by Tim Godden during an eight week training course at the University prior to their departure), the team's knowledge was excellent and they had the fantastic aid of a richly illustrated booklet, compiled by Tim, showing many little known images of Ieper as it looked in the twenties and thirties.

Each day for a fortnight the team was stationed in St George's ready to engage visitors. At the same time, people across the world were given the chance to interact with the project through regular Twitter updates and live Twitter-casts from the Church as particular memorials and items were explored in detail. The public response was excellent. 557 Tweets were retweeted or provoked some form of conversation and 1305 Tweets were 'liked' during the course of the fortnight.

The tours also proved extremely successful. Being an experiment, we were, naturally enough, concerned that this element could have been a flop, but with 10 in number run across the fortnight and backed by only a limited degree of advanced publicity, a glimpse at what a more in-depth plan with specially targeted audiences might achieve was given.

Comments from the public were universally positive and even included feedback on Tripadvisor. A Canadian visitor even left a jar of maple syrup for the team to enjoy!

Thanks to being in the church on a daily basis, and as a result, therefore, of seeing John Arnold, one of the Church Wardens, on a regular basis, it was possible to do a bit of exploring around the nooks and crannies of the building, and this resulted in the wonderful find of the visitors' books from 1948 onwards. The team immediately set to work tracing some of the people and finding out the stories behind their comments. Among the finds was, the widow of Captain Bowlby, whose story had been told in a series of tweets earlier in the week..

Many fascinating stories were also gained from visitors. A great moment was when the granddaughter of Canon J.O. Coop dropped by. Coop was chaplain to the 55 West Lancashire Division, wrote the divisional history, and one of the earliest guidebooks to the Western Front. It was hard to tell who was more surprised – the team at having such a visitor, or Mrs Tweed at having her grandfather's name recognised!

As this summary shows, the team did a great job maintaining high levels of energy, enthusiasm and presence throughout. Plenty of lessons have been learnt, which will be disseminated to the committee of the Friends, and a great benchmark has been set. With the Commonwealth War Graves Commission very interested in the outcome of the trial, there is potential for a wider collaboration with the intention of ensuring even more publicity for St George's Church maintaining its significance as both a living place of worship and as a unique war memorial.



The Studen Project Team from Kent University consisting of Natasha Silk, Hannah Kerns, Edward Tesei and Amy Harrison

Editor's note: It is has become a tradition of The Friends Pilgrimage to have the poem "The Day My Family Came," by Michael Edwards, read at the Cross of Remembrance at Tyne Cot. The 2017 Pilgrimage was no exception.

The Day My Family Came by Michael Edwards

I half awoke to a strange new calm
And a sleep that would not clear
For this was the sleep to cure all harm
And which freezes all from fear.

Shot had come from left and right
With shrapnel, shell and flame
And turned my sunlit days to night
Where now, none would call my name.

Years passed me by as I waited,
Missed the generations yet to come,
Sadly knew I would not be fated
To be a father, hold a son.

I heard again the sounds of war
When twenty years of sleep had gone,
For five long years, maybe more,
Till peace once more at last had come.

More years passed, new voices came,
The stones and trenches to explore,
But no-one ever called my name
So I wished and waited ever more.

Each time I thought, perhaps, perhaps,
Perhaps this time they must call me,
But they only called for other chaps,
No-one ever called to set me free.

Through years of lonely vigil kept,
To look for me they never came,
None ever searched or even wept,
Nobody stayed to speak my name.

Until that summer day I heard
Some voices soft and strained with tears,
Then I knew that they had come
To roll away those wasted years.

Their hearts felt out to hold me,
Made me whole like other men,
But they had come just me to see,
Drawing me back home with them.

Now I am at peace and free to roam
Where 'ere my family speak my name,
That day my soul was called back home
For on that day my family came.



Beryl Burgess reads "The Day My Family Came" at Tyne Cot Cemetery during the Friends 2017 Pilgrimage



Membership matters

We are continuing to modernise and update our membership records and would like to remind Friends that if you wish to receive communications via email to please pass your details on to our Membership Secretary, Miss Eve Speare. She can be contacted at espeare32@talktalk.net. We have already received some responses, for which we are very grateful. We will, of course, continue to communicate by traditional mail but are happy to embrace the ever changing "digital" world.

This is also to remind Members not paying by standing order that regular subscription needs to be paid on a regular basis to our Treasurer in order to ensure Members receive the Newsletters and other communications.

Armistice Day 11th November 2017

Friends are reminded that the Armistice Day Service in St George's takes place on Saturday 11th November 2017 starting at 0915hrs — those attending are asked to be in their seats by 0900hrs.


However, the only way to be part of the congregation that morning is to obtain tickets well in advance (maximum 6). And now is the time to book and obtain such tickets.

This can be done by writing to the Church Secretary, Mrs Ricky Beets at

Elverdingsestraat 1 - B 8900, Ieper, BELGIUM
or by emailing Ricky direct with your request at: ricky.beets@orange.fr

DEAR FRIENDS, DO HAVE A LOVELY SUMMER,

Derek Gallagher, Vice-Chairman of The Friends
derek@thegalls.demon.co.uk

A wide-angle photograph of a vast field of yellow flowers, likely rapeseed, stretching to the horizon. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds, with patches of blue visible. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

*The peace and tranquility returns to the
Somme and Flanders Fields
100 years later, as seen here from
the Guards Cemetery, Le Bouefs*