

First World War Commemorative Events

A First World War Pageant of Market Harborough

On Saturday 9th August at 11 a.m. and again at 12 noon a pageant commemorating the Market Harborough soldiers who fought in 1st World War was performed in the Town Square. The pageant was a re-enactment of a recruitment drive for the British Army in 1914. For the first 18 months of the war Britain had a small professional army and was thus heavily reliant on volunteers to boost its ranks. The Pageant was divided into two parts. The first part was a re-enactment of a recruitment drive with a Recruiting Sergeant supported by four soldiers urging local lads to volunteer. The actual names of men who volunteered from Harborough were given to the Recruiting Corporal who took down their details including their addresses and occupations. In the audience were people wearing period dress and some women were urging 'Votes for Women' and wearing the Suffragette sashes. Some of the men walked to the recruiting table to join up. The volunteers and troops were then blessed by The Reverend Jerwood (an actual vicar of the time of St Nicholas Church, Little Bowden) and then marched away.

The second half consisted of extracts from letters and memoirs of Harborough men being read out by returning soldiers, which told of the horrors of trench warfare. There was also a moving account of those left behind from a woman worker from Symington's Corset factory. The last part witnessed a lone bugler playing 'The Last Post' while the Reverend Jerwood read out some of the names of the Harborough men killed in the war. The whole pageant was wonderfully supported by the Harborough Band which played tunes such as 'Pack up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag', 'Keep the Homes Fires Burning' and other appropriate melodies of the period. The event was devised by The Harborough Improvement Team Heritage Group.

A Solemn Commemoration on the Centenary of the Outbreak of the First World War

On Monday 4th August 2014 a solemn commemoration service on the centenary of the outbreak of The First World War took place at St Dionysius Church. This was preceded by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in the Memorial Gardens. The church service commenced at 7:45 p.m. in which four candles were lit and each blown out after the reading of poems, Bible extracts and prayers concerning the conflagration. The choir gave a magnificent rendering of John Taverner's 'Song for Athene' under the baton of their conductor David Johnson.

Web Based 1st World War Project

A web based History project has been set up by Market Harborough Historical Society, Friends of the Harborough Museum, harboroughhistory.org.uk and the Harborough branch of the Royal British Legion. Funded by the Harborough and Bowden's Charity it records the lives of Harborough and district men who served in the First World War. The project is led by Pat Perkins and Dr Peter Mothersole and the site can be accessed by using <http://www.harborough.org.uk>.

Museum Exhibition – 'The Art of Danger and Drawn to War'

The newly opened Harborough Museum has devised an exhibition called 'The Art of Danger and Drawn to War.' It displays and explains works by artist Frank Branwyn who created pieces about the war and is contrasted by contemporary artist's works which reflect and interpret present day conflicts. The exhibition also contains objects of the 1st World War including a khaki army jacket, worn by local man JJ Carter of Lubenham, brass artillery shells, letters, a bayonet and medals.

by Dr Len Holden



Actors in the First World War Pageant, August 2014

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Annual History Day – The First World War in Market Harborough and Leicester

The Market Harborough Historical Society's annual History Day features 'The First World War in Market Harborough and Leicester.' Speakers include Craig Murray of The Imperial War Museum, talking on The Leicestershire Regiment in the 1st World War; Douglas Wooldridge (President of the Market Harborough Historical Society) talking on The Diary of a Sapper 1917 -18: The First World War Diary of G C Wooldridge; John Dilley (Director of the Leicester Centre of Journalism, De Montfort University and former editor of the Harborough Mail) talking on The Home Front: How the Regional and National Press covered The Great War; Pat Perkins (Committee Member of Market Harborough Historical Society) talking on The Harboro' Boys: Local lads who went to war and their experiences in the 1st World War; and Jane Tugwell (Harborough Museum Trust Local Co-ordinator) talking about Arthur Tugwell: Life and Death in the Trenches.

The Harboro' Boys Book

Market Harborough Historical Society is producing a book based on the manuscript written by Barry Summers. Barry, a member of the Historical Society up to the time of his death, spent a considerable amount of time researching the Harborough men who went off to war. It consists of those who joined the Navy and the newly formed Royal Flying Corps as well as the army. The work is a detailed study of the men and their backgrounds and the whole work is placed in the wider perspective of the main events of the war. It is liberally interspersed with photos of the men themselves and the photographs they themselves took in their campaigns. Former Curators of Harborough Museum, Sam Mullins and Steph Mastoris have written an introduction.