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To whom it may concern,

The Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne would like to present to your school this banner that was researched and designed by us, and then carried in a centenary WW1 Peace Day parade which we organised on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The names represent all those that we believe were either born, schooled, lived, died or loved ones who lived in the parish.

We hope that the attached news article will give you more information about the Peace Parade, and that your parish will both find a use for the banner and wish to keep it for the community.

We have been working with the Canterbury Diocese and we know they too hope that you would wish to utilise the banner. It is one of 35 produced for the 25 churches representing: Bapchild, Bobbing, Borden, Bredgar, Doddington, Frinsted, Hartlip, Iwade, Kingsdown, Lower Halstow, Lynsted, Milton, Milstead, Murston, Newington, Newnham, Norton Buckland and Stone, Rainham, Rodmersham, Sittingbourne, Stockbury, Teynham, Tonge, Tunstall and Upchurch.

Should you wish for more information or have relatives who wish to contact us for information about any of these names, we would be pleased to assist.

Your faithfully

Richard Emmett  
Chair HRGS

## HRGS Peace Day Celebrations Centenary Event

June the 29<sup>th</sup> 2019 was a momentous day, when the local community all came together to participate in, and witness a unique event. This was a WW1 Peace Day celebration within the Armed Forces Day parade, which coincided with the hottest day of the year, so far. Although the fighting ceased on 11th November 1918, the First World War did not officially end until the Peace Treaty was signed at Versailles, on 28th June 1919. The following month the whole country celebrated 'Peace Day'.



Our mission is to 'bring history alive'. It was with that in mind that we started the War Memorials Project over seven years ago. We wanted to bring to life those whose names are remembered on local memorials, by telling their stories. A team of over 140 dedicated volunteers have researched over three thousand men and women from the Swale area, including of course the 1162 from Sittingbourne and the surrounding parishes whose names were displayed on the 36 banners, carried on Saturday.



With temperatures reaching 29°C (84°F), those taking part in the parade (many in costumes) gathered in the churchyard of St Michael's, before proceeding at 11am up the High Street to Central Avenue. All those who registered to participate, just short of 200, received a commemorative WW1 Peace Day medal lapel badge, a replica of the original medal given in 1919, which had been specially commissioned by HRGS.

The WW1 parade followed the band of the Sheppey Sea Cadets and members of the Reserve Armed Forces, Royal British Legion, Veterans, Sittingbourne and Sheppey Cadets, Scouts, Guides and Brownies.



The first of the 36 WW1 banners was carried by Father Kevin Jacobs, Chaplain to the Royal Air Force - Air Cadets, and the Benefice of Tunstall and Bredgar churches, together with the Deputy Mayor of Swale, Councillor Roger Clark.

This banner displayed pictures of the processions held by local people one hundred years ago, and carried the message 'Celebrating the Centenary of the Festivals and Parades held on Peace Day 1919. We give thanks to all of those from Sittingbourne and surrounding villages, who played their part in bringing about victory and peace; and remember those who gave their lives.'



The other 35 banners had the names of those with a local connection, who died during the First World War, including the youngest, Alec Grigg, aged 14, the oldest Major Joshua Fielding, aged 76, and the only female, Alice Post, aged 21. They were - Bapchild (carried by Margaret Edwards and Valerie Smith), Bobbing (carried by Allan Mercer and Lara Apps) (See picture on the right), Borden (carried by Samantha Mann and family), Bredgar (carried by Ray and Judy Huntley), Doddington (carried by Ken and Jane Seyler), Frinsted (carried by Malcom and Rita Major), Hartlip (carried by Marion Ralph and family), Iwade (carried by Graeme and Pamela Horner) (see picture on the left), Lower Halstow (carried by Jackie Swift and friend), Lynsted (carried by Richard and Diane Stew), Milstead (carried by Keith and Lena Jordan), Milton Council Schools (carried by Anne Butler and Jack Jones), Milton Churches (carried by Alan and Sheila Woodcock), Murston (carried by Liz Mouland, Jo Apps and family and Sally Jarrett), Newington (carried by Newington History Group - Richard Thompstone, Sue Flipping, Graham and Thelma Dudley), Newnham (carried by Roger Chapman and a member of the public), Norton Buckland and Stone (carried by Colin Benson and Mrs Chamberlin) (see picture on the right) Rainham (carried by Rainham Historical Society - Don and Jacky Harris), Rodmersham (carried by Pascal and Kathy Johnson) (see picture on the left), Sittingbourne Town & Avenue of Remembrance (carried by Terry and Ellen Matson), Sittingbourne Baptist Church (carried by Zara Latham and Jill Fordham), Sittingbourne - Borden Grammar School (carried by Ian Prentice and the Coombs family), Sittingbourne Cemetery (carried by Mike Baldock and Paul Gebbie), Sittingbourne Congregational Church (carried by Chris Read and Jo Eden and members of Rose Street Cottage of Curiosities) (see picture right), Sittingbourne - Flowers by Beatrice (carried by Sarah Fish and Rodney Clark) (see picture below left), Sittingbourne Holy Trinity Church (carried by Christine Miller and Kim Pedley), Sittingbourne - Lloyds Paper Mill (carried by Rebecca and Kate Crompton & the Kemsley Paper Mill team including Stephen Chesson) (see picture below right) Sittingbourne St Mary's Church (carried by Elaine and Darren Appleton), Sittingbourne St Michael's Church (carried by Roy Spicer and Enya Williams), Sons of Sittingbourne & Milton - as they were not on any other memorial (carried by Mrs Singer and Kimberly Singer), Stockbury (carried by John Weeks and Callum Perriam), Teynham (carried by Kate and John Stew), Tonge (carried by Martin Langford and friend), Tunstall (carried by Pat Tatchell and Susan Jacobs), and Upchurch (carried by Chris Andrews and Gerry Lewin).



Others taking part carried a photograph of a relative who had died, or of one who had served and survived. There were also people, including whole families, dressed in historical costumes, just as the local people did in the original parade.



The procession was headed by the Sittingbourne Town Crier, Richard Spooner, with the distinctive tone and volume of a town crier, dressed in his traditional red and gold tunic. At the junction with Central Avenue the Parade was greeted by local dignitaries, including the Mayor of Swale - Councillor Ken Ingleton, Gordon Henderson MP, and Miss Sittingbourne - Charlotte Jordan. The Town Crier introduced the Mayor of Swale, who officially opened the Armed



Forces Day event, which was taking place in the High Street over the rest of the day.

The WW1 procession then made its way to the War Memorial, where a Fire Engine was stationed - another link with the past, as the Sittingbourne Fire Brigade had been involved in 1919.



At the War Memorial - Richard Emmett, Chair of HRGS, thanked everyone for attending and for participating in the day, with all their costumes and flags, and then introduced Father Kevin Jacobs. After a short address by Father Kevin, who blessed the banners, he asked that they be taken back to their respective churches as a reminder of what sacrifice had been made and as a symbol of peace for the future.



The gathered crowd was led in song by members of 'Swale Sings', and joined in with rousing renditions of popular tunes from WW1. Starting with 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary', which soldiers commonly sang as they left for war; then 'Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag', which the soldiers marched to; and finishing with 'Rule Britannia'. The latter was sung with such pride and gusto to mark victory and peace then, as it was on this day too.



During the last rendition of 'Rule Britannia', the Deputy Mayor of Swale, Councillor Roger Clark assisted Geoff Preece of 'The White Doves of Dover', in releasing 25 white doves. They represented Sittingbourne, Milton and the villages of Bapchild, Bobbing, Borden, Bredgar, Doddington, Frinsted, Hartlip, Iwade, Kingsdown, Lower Halstow, Lynsted, Milstead, Murston, Newington, Newnham, Norton Buckland and Stone, Rainham, Rodmersham, Stockbury, Teynham, Tonge, Tunstall and Upchurch. They were a beautiful symbol of peace - their stark white plumage against a brilliant blue sky, as they circled once, before heading home to Dover. A spectacular display to cap off a well-attended parade which remembered those who gave so much.



The WW1 parade was organised by a committee led by the Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne (HRGS). The committee members were: Alan Amos, Margaret Edwards, Richard Emmett (chair), Theresa Emmett, Janet Halligan, Don Harris, Jacky Harris, Father Kevin Jacobs, Stewart Kitching, Nadine Miller, Pat Robinson, John Weeks and Enya Williams.





The Armed Forces event continued in the High Street over the rest of the day, and included a number of competitions. The event concluded with our President, Deputy Lieutenant Paul Auston Esq., taking the salute and presenting awards to the cadets.



The HRGS stall had a large variety of history books, including those published on WW1, the latest one being: 'A Soldier's War – The Autobiography of Private Charles Joseph Robinson'; and a 28 page Peace Day souvenir booklet based on the original East Kent Gazette Peace Day celebrations, with many of the stories from the local parish events from 1919 (price £1). These, together with the commemorative WW1 Peace Day Medal Lapel Badge (price £3), are now on sale in The Heritage Hub.



Much of the funding for the Peace Day Parade was thanks to Alan Amos, who had secured funding from Flowers by Beatrice, The Alma Public House, A & V Smith, and the Gamble, Hughes, Bournes and Nicholls families. Funding also came from The Somme Yomp' lads, and via Richard Emmett, Jerry and Mary Cooley, who were instrumental in organising nine WW1 themed talks, that were held in 2017-2018 to raise funds. The original funding for these coming from Swale Borough Council.

The Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne (HRGS) wish to thank all these who attended, helped with the event organisation, carried banners and photographs and contributed to the research behind all the names, the Armed Forces marshals, and especially the WW1 Peace Day marshals who worked tirelessly that day in the heat: Alan Amos, Margaret Edwards, Richard Emmett, Theresa Emmett, Janet Halligan, Don Harris, Jacky Harris, Stewart Kitching, Nadine Miller, Kim Pedley, Callum Perriam, Pat Robinson, John Weeks, Enya Williams, and to Julie Earp, Catherine Fisher and Pat Watson who helped run the stall.

Richard Emmett, the Chair of HRGS said "The parade had indeed succeeded in 'bringing history alive' to mark the centenary of the Peace Day Celebrations held in 1919, with so many of the local community in costumes and waving flags, as the local people did 100 years ago. I think we did our lads proud!"

Just a few of the many other comments on the event: 'We wish to say thank you so much for organising a great parade last Saturday. It was an impressive procession and we hope you were pleased with it too. It was lovely to be able to honour the soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and my grandfather.' (Pascal and Kathy Johnson); 'Congratulations and my thanks to you and the rest of HRGS for organising Saturday's event. The logistics, effort and hard work that went into it were there to be seen and resulted in its success.' (Richard Thompstone) and 'To everyone who helped with today's Peace Day celebration--the day was wonderful, the weather fantastic and everything went like clockwork --and most of all it was a moving, fitting tribute to all our brave ancestors who fought and lost their lives 100 years ago. I know how much hard work is needed to organise such an event--and we were both proud to play a small part in this today. I am sure you, yourselves, must all be very relieved and pleased of how the day went. Thank you again.' (Lena and Keith Jordan).

**Should you have information about relatives who died in the First World War, who are local men (Sittingbourne and surrounding areas), please help tell their stories by visiting: The Heritage Hub, Unit 17, The Forum, Sittingbourne, ME10 3DL or by email [ww1@hrgs.co.uk](mailto:ww1@hrgs.co.uk).**