

First World War centenary

We shall remember them

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the armistice of the First World War, over the next four weeks **Ann Cullis** from Bath and North East Somerset Council will highlight some of the events happening this November and looks back at events and projects over the last four years in B&NES

Harry Patch was born and lived in Combe Down, and died aged 111 in 2009.

He did not speak about his experiences as a soldier in the First World War until very late in his life; and when he did, he always emphasised how ordinary he was.

As he became older and older, out-living his friends and comrades, he felt that people treated him as a minor celebrity when (he said) his only unusual quality was to have lived to such a great age.

After the war, he was a plumber and heating engineer and worked on the water supply to the Roman Baths.

In the Guildhall in Bath, half way up the main staircase, is a plaque to honour Harry Patch, and also a framed certificate: the Honorary Fellowship awarded to him by the Chartered Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering, on June 17 2009. He died on 25 July - just five weeks after the Honorary Fellow-



Harry Patch, who fought in the First World War at Passchendaele with the 7th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, pictured in 2007, aged 109, at Dochy Farm Cemetery in Flanders

Picture: Philip Coburn

ship was awarded.

In Combe Down there is a small commemorative plaque on the

front of the house where he lived, and one of the roads in the new Mulberry Park develop.

been named Patch Street in his honour.

Illustrated memories shared with children

The late Roma Tomkins remembered how her father would tell her brother bed-time stories about his time in the war; as a little girl, she wasn't supposed to hear, but her brother left his bedroom door just ajar so that she could secretly listen. Other contributors spoke of fathers or grandfathers who lost limbs and their fortitude in managing their disability, and the terrible effects of 'shell shock' - which we now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - that rendered men unable to work or even leave the house.

Breathing life into the faded photographs of a hundred years ago, the stories that were shared have been full of incident, humour and sadness.

A Century's Memories an illustrated, limited edition book which will be given to every school in Bath and North East Somerset, and will be available to borrow from libraries.

A small number of copies will be distributed through other outlets. For more information contact centenary_worldwar1@bathnes.gov.uk



Illustration: Karen Donnelly

Pictures tell stories of soldiers' war time experiences in Bath

Soldiers from The 12th Hampshire Regiment were billeted in Bathwick for about two months from March to May 1915, after which they moved on to Wiltshire for further training.

While in Bath, they stayed in various large private homes in Bathwick Hill and the surrounding area.

Soldiers passed through Bath on the way to and from training camps throughout the war; they must have added energy to Bath's nightlife at the time. The Electric Theatre in Westgate Street put on a special concert and cinematograph show for the troops at Christmas 1914.



Souvenir commemorates the fallen

Bath & North East Somerset Council has produced a souvenir magazine publication, available in November, commemorating the First World War centenary and highlighting many of the events and projects that have happened over the four years 2014-2018.

Numerous communities, groups and organisations have put on special events and commemorations, almost all of them run solely by vol-

unteers. Some of these are recorded on the council's web pages for the WWI centenary: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/tourism-and-heritage/local-history/world-war-one-centenary>

The souvenir publication *We Remembered* is available free of charge during November from Libraries, The Guildhall, The Hobbies in Midsomer Norton, Keynsham Library & One Stop Shop,

Bath Abbey, town councils, and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal depot at 70 Walcot Street.

How We Remembered is a limited edition of 3,000 so make sure you get your free copy. The main services and ceremonies for Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday 11 November, are listed inside.

This Remembrance Sunday, let's all make the promise:

'We will remember them.'

Remembrance Sunday services

Centenary of the Armistice at the end of World War One, 1918

Ceremonies and Services in Bath - Sunday, November 11

6am-6.30am, Bath Abbey
Lone Piper 'Battle's Over' Ceremony before dawn

10.30am-12 noon, Bath Abbey
Centenary of Armistice Eucharist Service

10.45am-11.15am, City of Bath War Memorial, Royal Victoria Park
Royal British Legion Remembrance Wreath Laying Ceremony

2pm-2.45pm, Royal British Legion Remembrance Parade and March Past

(Parade from bottom of Milson Street to the Guildhall; March Past and Taking the Salute outside the Guildhall; Parade to Bath Abbey)

3pm-4pm, Bath Abbey
The Royal British Legion Remembrance Service

6.50pm-7.15pm, City of Bath War Memorial, Royal Victoria Park
'Last Post' Ceremony marking the end of the WWI Centenary Ceremonies and Services in wider Bath, and in North East Somerset

Combe Down

Service 10am at Holy Trinity Church followed by Wreath Laying Ceremony at War Memorial, Firs Field, 11am

Haycombe Cemetery

Remembrance Service at the Cross of Remembrance, 10.45am

Keynsham

Parade to St John's Church 9am for church service, followed by parade to the Memorial Park Gates for Wreath Laying Ceremony, 11am

Midsomer Norton

Parade from Stones Cross to War Memorial 10.30am for Act of Remembrance and Wreath Laying 11am, followed by service at St John the Baptist Church

Paulton

March along High Street 2pm, to short service at the War Memorial and then at Holy Trinity Church

Radstock

Ecumenical Service at Radstock Methodist Church, 1.15pm, followed by procession to War Memorial, Waterloo Road, and Royal British Legion 'Last Post' ceremony, 2.30pm

Twerton

Service 10.30am at St Michael & All Angels Church; Wreath Laying Ceremony at War Memorial, 11am

Westfield

Commemoration at the Memorial in Elm Tree Avenue, 11am

Weston, Bath

Wreath laying at the War Memorial, High Street, Weston 11am