

Heartbeat



Monday, 8 November

Issue 8

Year 8 pay their respects at WWI memorial

During half-term, 60 Year 8 students set off on a pilgrimage to pay their respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War I, writes Mrs Garner

The discomfort of a lengthy coach journey and a very late arrival at our accommodation in Messines seemed like a small price to pay in comparison.

On Saturday (October 23), our first stop was Essex Farm Cemetery, where Jacob Garforth laid a wreath on the grave of the 15-year-old rifleman, Valentine Strudwick, whilst Jack Deevey read 'For The Fallen', by Laurence Binyon, and we all said the Eternal Rest. As this was the site where John McRae wrote his famous poem, Nathan Sanderson read 'In Flanders Field' outside the remains of the dressing station.

We then visited the Yorkshire Trench to find out about the conditions in which a lost generation would live, fight and die.

Our next port of call was Langemarck German Cemetery, where the fallen, who were mostly aged between 14 and 20, are buried in an enormous mass grave.

During our time there, we were able to think about the meaning of the phrase, 'lost generation', from the point of view of both sides. Some of us left crosses of remembrance.

Our final stop before lunch was Tyne Cot Cemetery, which is the largest of the Commonwealth war graves cemeteries. It is on the site of the Battle of Passchendaele, which

is famous for its muddy conditions. Right on cue, the heavens opened and pelted us with freezing rain. This certainly gave us an opportunity to think about what it would have been like to live in an open trench in such conditions.

After some free time for lunch in Ypres town square, we visited the Passchendaele Trench and Dugout Experience and the Hooze Crater Museum in order to see the uniforms worn and weapons used by both sides as well as to walk through a reconstructed dugout.

We also visited Bedford House Cemetery to see the gravestone of Private Peaceful, which inspired Michael Morpurgo to write his famous novel, which Year 8 are currently reading.

In the evening, we were incredibly fortunate to take part in the daily ceremony of remembrance at the Menin Gate.

As well as the usual playing of the last post, we were also lucky enough to hear a Breton Choir as well as the hymn, Amazing Grace, amongst other things, on the bagpipes. Mr Gardiner accompanied Millie Cooney and George Hughes as they laid a wreath on behalf of the school at the Menin Gate memorial. The students said this was a very moving, as well as scary, experience as they were representing the school in front of a crowd of hundreds. They did us proud as the rain lashed down once more!

Continued on p2



The week in brief

The Comenius exchange visit started yesterday (Sunday) and will run all week. GCSE exams take place this week. SVP meet at 3.30pm in Nazareth House tomorrow and the Feed The Homeless initiative takes place on Wednesday from 3.30pm. Finally, the GCSE Presentation Evening is on Friday.

Continued from p1

On Sunday, we decided to visit the so-called Trench of Death at Diksmuide in order to learn about the contribution of Belgian troops to halting the German advance. We were able to walk through a huge trench network in very muddy conditions as well as see a number of machine gun posts.

Our pilgrimage then got very personal as we visited the tiny Maple Leaf Cemetery so that Chris Williams could lay a wreath on the grave of his ancestor from New Zealand, who fell in the Great War.

We then went to search for the name of Sam Thompson's ancestor on the memorial to the missing at Ploegsteert, where Sam laid our final wreath. At this memorial, we listened to a number of readings, said the Eternal Rest and held a minute's silence to remember the fallen of all conflicts since 1914.

We then began our long journey back to Crosby feeling tired but exhilarated and having gained some understanding that in war, there are no winners, only losers.

Exemplary

The conduct of our students was exemplary throughout. We received numerous compliments during our tour; both of our guides thanked the students for their attention and said they were a very well behaved group. The receptionist at the Dugout Museum said ours was the quietest and most polite group that had visited the museum that day. Members of the public approached me after the ceremony at the Menin Gate to say that our students were a real credit to the school. I agree wholeheartedly and feel very proud of them.

Of course, the students would not have had such a unique experience if it was not for the dedication of the teachers who were prepared to give up part of their half term in order to accompany them.

I am sure that students and parents would like to join me in thanking Mr Hughes, Miss Niescier, Mrs Fagan, Miss Court, Mr Thirlwall and Mr Gardiner for making this visit possible

Do the Math



On Thursday, ten pupils from Years 12 and 13 took part in the UKMT Senior Maths Challenge. This is a national Maths problem solving test which is taken by 90,000 UK pupils. Top performing pupils qualify for follow-on rounds and the very best can represent their country in the International Mathematical Olympiad. Good luck to all who took part.

