

Heartbeat



Monday, November 3

Issue 8

Y8 remember those who made ultimate sacrifice



Year 8's annual trip to Ypres took place last month. Among those who accompanied the students was Head of History, Mrs Garner, here is her account of the trip.

On the 17th October, 65 pupils from Year 8 arrived at upper site at 7.30am to take part in this very special pilgrimage to the Ypres Salient.

The trip was designed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of the supposed 'war to end all wars'.

Ypres was the scene of some of the most sustained trench warfare of the First World War.

The pupils, along with seven staff, left Sacred Heart on the long journey to Dover for an afternoon crossing. Ultimate desti-

nation was the Poppies Hotel, set in the beautifully restored medieval Belgian town of Ypres, alternatively known as 'Wipers' to the British Tommies on the Western Front.

Another early start the next day brought us to our first port of call, Essex Farm Cemetery, where John McCrae wrote his famous poem, In Flanders Fields, which was beautifully read to us by Hannah Thompson (8A), outside what remains of the concrete dugouts.

Next, we stopped at Langemarck, a suitably sombre Germanic military cemetery containing 44,000 enemy dead. It was very clear our pupils would be as respectful of the German dead as of those of the 'British Empire'. We then made a very

brief stop at the Yorkshire trench, recently discovered on an industrial site, followed by a visit to the museum in Zonnebeke in order to walk through the reconstruction of a network of dugouts and trenches.

One of the last visits before lunch was to the impressive Tyne Cot British Military cemetery, the largest of its type in the world, each individual grave beautifully maintained by the CWGC and marked in Portland stone. Our pupils were fascinated to find graves of teenagers, Liverpudlians, Jewish and Muslim soldiers, ANZACS, Canadians and so many men still unidentified. Few were left unmoved by the scale of a site containing around 12,000 British Empire dead.

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Pupils learn to CoPE at Tawd Vale



Some of our Year 11 students swapped the classroom for the countryside last month as they battled the elements at Tawd Vale, *writes Mr Mitchell.*

The object of the excursion was to test their ability to work as an effective group during a camping trip and thus obtain the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE).

Having arrived as it was already getting dark, they immediately had the task of putting up the tents and, although practice sections had been done, these had not been done in the dark. Despite the failing light and some missing equipment, everyone succeeded in putting their tents up.

Next was the food, and the young adventurers mastered the art of improvisation by cooking supper on a camp fire using an old metal drum.

Although very slow to start, as they had to make sure everything was well cooked,

the sausages and bacon were then burnt to a delicious crisp.

While the food cooked, everyone explored the wood in the moonlight, which provided an unusually effective form of hide and seek.

Miss Cutler entertained everyone with stories and camping skills. Slowly, people retired to their tents, only to re-emerge to wake me for more bacon to cook.

The morning saw a very different picture. Whereas the evening had been calm, warm and dry, the morning brought the cold and very wet rain.

Despite this, all the tents were packed away, the site was cleaned up and everything was packed into the minibus.

Thoughts then moved to how food was to be cooked. It proved impossible to start the fire. Some very friendly fellow campers who had hired a nearby cabin came to the rescue.

Two of the girls used their kitchen to cook breakfast, which was eagerly devoured on the bus.

Finally, to round off the experience, an archery session had been arranged. Despite being cold and wet, Joe Marland (11S) proved to be the master of the bow, before everyone returned to the bus to get home, dry and warm.

Astonishingly they all want to do it again.

News in brief

There is a meeting regarding the London trip at 6pm tomorrow in St Edward Hall. From Tuesday to Thursday, the Year 11 Mock Interviews take place in the Prep Hall. Year 11 Consultation Evening takes place on Thursday and, on Saturday, the Merseyside Scout County Awards ceremony takes place in St Edward Hall from 8am.

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On the back wall amongst the names of the men missing in action, we located Private Philip McInnes, Great, Great Uncle of Ryan Harding. There, we laid a wreath and said the Eternal Rest to remember his sacrifice, leaving many of us overcome with emotion.

In the unusually warm weather, lunch in Ypres was welcomed as an opportunity to load up with rations of Belgian chocolate and waffles before heading to Hill 60 (60 metres above sea level being worthy of note in Belgium and of vital strategic advantage in a flat landscape) and the neighbouring crater.

Here, Australian miners had tunnelled at great depth and distance to literally blow up the German defences, leaving vast craters that remain to this day.

It was at one of these craters, surrounded by Autumn colours and to a background of birdsong, a minute's si-

lence was observed by the pupils, after readings and prayers led by the staff. Our final visit was to the Sanctuary Wood Museum, also known as Hill 62, to see a collection packed with artefacts, ranging from a huge selection of uniforms, weapons and medals to less obvious items, like copies of the British Army newspaper, *Wipers Times*, trench art made from shell cases and a unique, intact, German field kitchen (to confirm the old maxim that an army marches on its stomach). Pupils were also able to walk through the mud-filled trenches which still remain as part of the museum gardens. After a hot meal of chicken and chips, we gathered in reflective mood at the famous Menin Gate Ceremony of Remembrance. Held at 8pm every night since 1928, this is Belgium's tribute to the 55,000 dead of the British forces who have no known grave.

To the sound of a choir, three wreaths were laid by Jacob Mangan (8T), Luke Turner (8T), Charlotte Graham (8A), Emily Mercer (8A) and Mr Gardiner on behalf of Scared Heart. Dedications were also written on the wreaths by the Head Boy and Head Girl, as well as by Mr Gardiner, watched by hundreds of silent witnesses from all around the world. All were privileged to be there at an event that will not be quickly forgotten.

With duties complete, we re-embarked for Blighty at 10.45am on Sunday, mission accomplished. All pupils received official commendations for good conduct.

On behalf of myself and the pupils, a big thank you goes out to Mr Gardiner, Mr Summerfield, Mr Thirlwall, Mrs Reid, Mr Robertson and Mrs Fagan for giving up their weekend to make this pilgrimage possible.