

Heartbeat



Monday, November 12



Issue 9



Lest we forget 1918-2018



During last month's half term, 60 students from Years 8 and 9 arrived at Upper Site at 4am to take part in a very special pilgrimage to the Somme and Ypres Salient, *writes History teacher, Mr Gardiner.*

The trip granted staff and students an opportunity to see Ypres, scene of some of the most sustained trench warfare of the First World War, and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

The students, along with six staff, left Sacred Heart on the long journey to Dover for an afternoon crossing. Ultimate destination was Albert, the scene of fierce fighting in 1916.

It was here, more than 100 years ago, the Battle of the Somme took place. Many historians comment that this battle was the worst British Military disaster ever. On the first day alone, 60,000 men were killed, injured or missing.

Our first visit began in the picturesque town of Albert, at the Somme 1916 museum, deep underground.

Conditions

Many of our students were able to see the weapons used during the battle and the conditions which the soldiers were to live in.

Our second day involved a visit to the Lochnager crater. Here, at 7:28am, a large mine exploded underneath German trenches to begin the Battle of the Somme.

We then moved on to Thiepval Memorial, which commemorates more than 70,000 men who died in the Somme but have no known grave.

Another early start the next day brought us to Ypres. A beautiful Flemish town that was completely destroyed during the war.

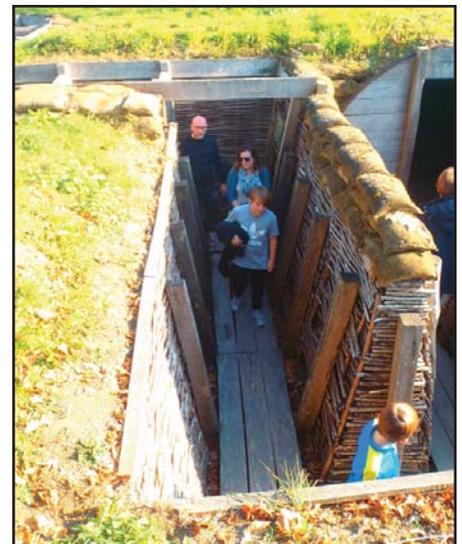


After meeting our two tour guides, we began our visit to Essex Farm Cemetery, where John McCrae wrote his famous poem, *In Flanders Fields*, which was beautifully read to us by Abe Campbell, outside what remains of the concrete dugouts.

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

Lunch in Ypres town square was welcome, as it provided an opportunity to load up with rations of Belgian chocolate and waffles.

Continued on p2



Continued from p1

We then headed up to the Passchendaele Museum in Zonnebeke, where we walked through the reconstruction of a network of dugouts and trenches.

We also had the chance to see a range of weapons and uniforms and view a short film which really put the events in and around Ypres into context.

The last visit 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 students were fascinated to find graves of teenagers, Liverpoolians, 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. On the way back to the hostel, we paused to pay our respects to Private E. F. Smith of the 19th King's Liverpool Regiment, a relative of Alfie Murphy and his family.

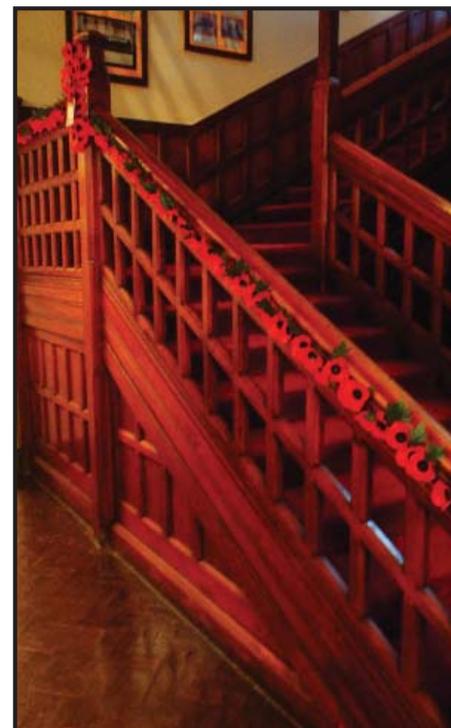
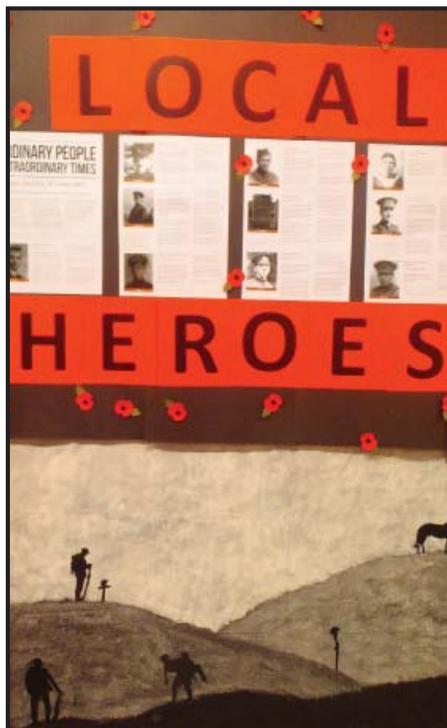
After a hot meal, we gathered in reflec-

tive 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.

After *The Last Post*, two wreaths were laid by Sam Stewart, Thomas Thirlwall, Rachel Murphy and Isabella Telles-Lennon and Mr Thirlwall on behalf of Sacred Heart. Dedications were also written on the wreaths by Mr Hughes and Mrs Shields. This was 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, the following day we re-embarked for Blighty at 9am on Monday morning, mission accomplished and made it back to school an hour ahead of schedule.

On behalf of myself and the pupils, a big thank you goes to Mr Radford, Mr Hughes, Mr Thirlwall, Miss Niescier, Mrs Shields and Dr Hanrahan for giving up their weekend to make this pilgrimage possible.



Ahead of yesterday's Remembrance Sunday services to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice and the end of World War One, Sacred Heart staff and students paid their own tributes.

A number of our students took part in services throughout Sefton yesterday, whilst, on Friday, the school fell silent as staff and students remembered those who made the

ultimate sacrifice during WWI.

The College bell rang at 11am to signify the start of a period of silence as lessons came to a halt.

Elsewhere within the College, there was a display on the Ground Floor that included some of the 'local heroes' from within Sefton who fought in the war and highlighted the sacrifices and hardship they suffered.

News in brief

Auditions for this year's stage production, *Return To The Forbidden Planet*, take place on Wednesday. Year 11 & 13 photographs take place on Thursday morning. On Friday, the London trip leaves and there is a Y13 Mock Drama exam with actor, Ian Redford, advising.