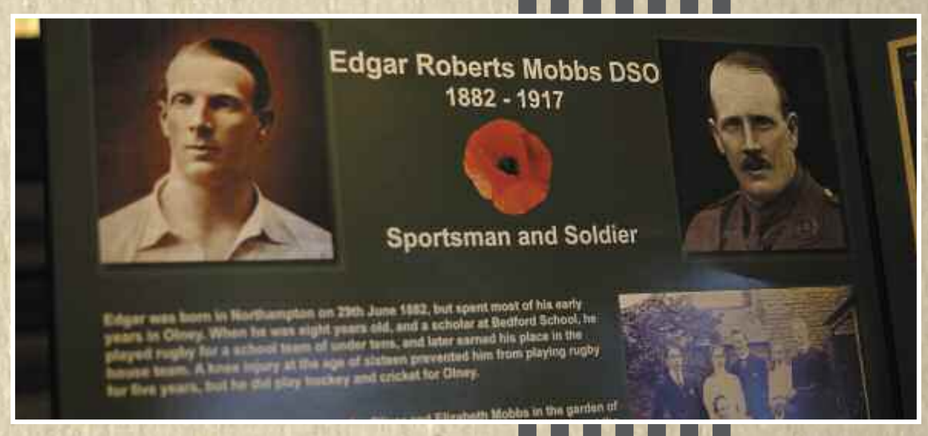
GREAT WAR MK

Introduction to Great War MK

Our **Great War MK** project has undertaken research and collected stories about the 1914-18 First World War (WW1) to inform new educational works including theatre in a full-size replica 1st WW1 tank, large-scale commemorative dance, an Old Time Music Hall event, handmade banners, new music from young musicians, film shows of the Great War era, extraordinary installations and exhibitions – making the history and reality of WW1 come alive.

Great War MK is a collaborative project led by the Arts & Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes (AHA-MK). It explores the impact of the First World War on the communities of Milton Keynes – an area now covering six towns, 41 villages and over 1/4 million people – through research, commemorative events, participatory learning activity and community workshops.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Community Foundation, this project has brought together various organisations, which are all exploring WW1 themes using different methods to tell stories. The partner organisations are Cowper and Newton Museum, Deanshanger Village Heritage Society, Festive Road, Independent Cinema Milton Keynes, Living Archive Milton Keynes, MK Gallery, Pepper's Ghost Theatre Company, Westbury Arts Centre, and through support from Milton Keynes Heritage Association, Bucks Constabulary Museum, North Crawley Historical Society and Simpson History Group.



ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

GREAT WAR MK

LOTTERY FUNDED heritage lottery fund

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

mkcommunity foundation
connecting and growing our community

www.greatwarmk.wordpress.com

www.facebook.com/GreatWarMK

GREAT WAR MK

Bucks Constabulary Remembered 1914-1918

Bucks Constabulary Museum researched the 76 men from the County's Police Force, including those from local towns and villages, who fought in the Great War. Local newspapers, police and military records all uncovered information and stories that were used in a commemorative exhibition. This paid tribute to the men – in particular the 15 who died serving their country. It was accompanied by artefacts from the Museum's collection – including a sock and bullet that wounded PC Raymond Rickard's toe so seriously he was discharged from the Army.

Bucks Constabulary Special Police Officers c1915: men were appointed by local authorities to assist the Force during the war

A Special Reserve of Police Constables has been formed in Buckinghamshire to fill the vacancies of service men who have been ordered to rejoin their regiments or report themselves to their Naval depôts. Three of these special service men including an ironmonger's assistant and a motor carriage builder, are on duty at Newport Pagnell, three at Wolverton, three at Stony Stratford and three at Bletchley.

News article from The Bucks Standard, 15th August 1914

Bucks Constabulary logo

Police Helmet with Bucks Constabulary badge c1914

Bucks Constabulary exhibition at CMK Police Station

North Crawley Historical Society

On Saturday, September 13th 2014, as part of that year's Heritage Open Days, North Crawley Historical Society arranged an exhibition to commemorate the anniversary of the start of the First World War. Over 100 men from the village served; 25 did not return. It is hard to imagine the impact 100 young men going to war had on a village the size of North Crawley. There were display boards for all the soldiers who served. Where possible, there was a photo and as much information on each that was available. Other WW1 memorabilia was also displayed. Around 150 visited the exhibition on that day and a further 30 when it was displayed again on a smaller scale in January 2015. The society is in the process of putting the exhibition material into a book.

www.mkheritage.co.uk

GREAT WAR MK

Great War MK in Olney

Cowper and Newton Museum (CNM) has commemorated life in Olney during the Great War through a series of events. First there was a commemoration of local hero Edgar Mobbs, who was part of a charity rugby match in 1915. 100 years later, CNM worked with Olney Rugby Football Club to stage a re-enactment and exhibition dedicated to the memory of the 16 Olney players who were killed in the Great War.

CNM also delivered an 'Old Time Music Hall' that featured music, comedy and sing-alongs and a 'Songs and Poetry Night'. Played to a full house on both occasions, these events were very well received and effectively brought the home front in Olney to life.

The final commemorative event for CNM was the screening of an animated tale titled 'Tommy in the Trench', which tells the poignant story of the maker's Grandfather and his experience of the war.

Above: The 'Old Time Music Hall'

Left: 'Tommy in the Trench'

Below: 'Songs and Poetry Night'

Olney Rugby and Football Clubs commemorating the 16 players who died during the Great War

www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk

GREAT WAR MK

Deanshanger Village Heritage Society

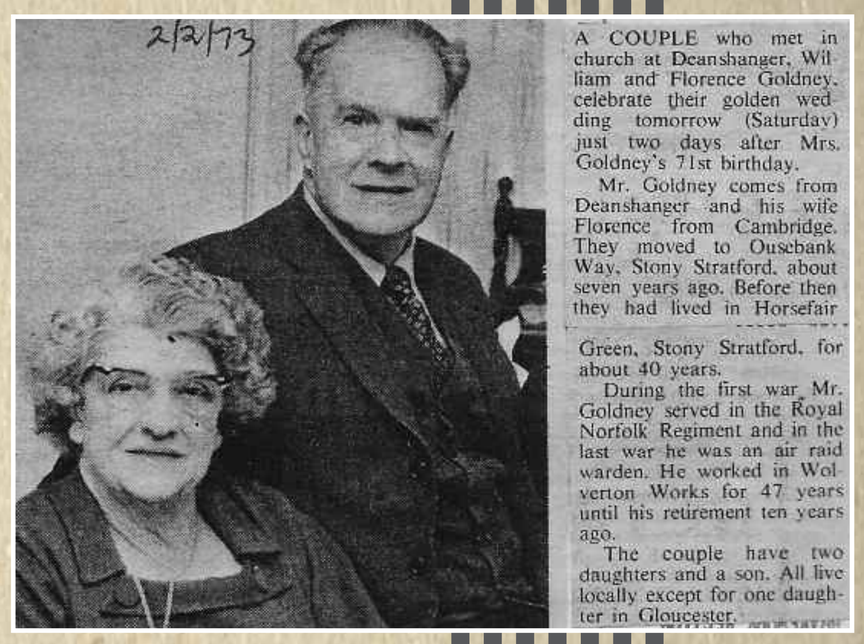
Volunteers' research uncovered 173 soldiers who served in WW1, of whom 20 died. We found a hidden history of military deeds, of medals awarded and tales of the effects of the war both on them and the families of this small rural Northamptonshire parish.

We learned of Ambulance Driver Miss 'Dick' Holland's harrowing tales of starvation – freezing to a mule's saddle whilst escaping the advancing enemy in Serbia. Grace Cooper was one of the first 16 women employed in the moulding shop of E&H Roberts Ltd iron works in 1916. The Works, despite manpower shortages, enjoyed a period of prosperity producing thousands of their award-winning ploughs and agricultural implements for the home front. This was when local businesses, farmers and families appealed to the Potterspury Military Tribunal to keep men at home. Women and children were used to plant and reap the harvest. School children collected eggs, walking sticks and socks; they knitted scarves; and collecting blackberries for jam-making became a classroom lesson.

The entire Deanshanger Primary School participated with art and written work in 'A Postcard from the Trenches' project. These are the Foundation Year winners' artworks at the 'Deanshanger Feast', October 2014.

www.mkheritage.co.uk

Private T Tindell's great-grandson and great, great-granddaughters hold his medals. Our September 2014 exhibition and collecting event gathered the history of those native to the village and those who have moved into it.


2/2/73

A COUPLE who met in church at Deanshanger, William and Florence Goldney, celebrate their golden wedding tomorrow (Saturday) just two days after Mrs. Goldney's 71st birthday.

Mr. Goldney comes from Deanshanger and his wife Florence from Cambridge. They moved to Ousebank Way, Stony Stratford, about seven years ago. Before then they had lived in Horsefair Green, Stony Stratford, for about 40 years.

During the first war Mr. Goldney served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment and in the last war he was an air raid warden. He worked in Wolverton Works for 47 years until his retirement ten years ago.

The couple have two daughters and a son. All live locally except for one daughter in Gloucester.

Mr & Mrs Goldney celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. These 1970s newspaper articles supplied vital information about those who had served and come home.

DVHS Great War Activity Day – Periscope & Poppy-making, a costume dressing-up box and WW1 militaria were just a few of the activities at our July 2015 family fun day and final exhibition.

DEANSHANGER VILLAGE HERITAGE SOCIETY

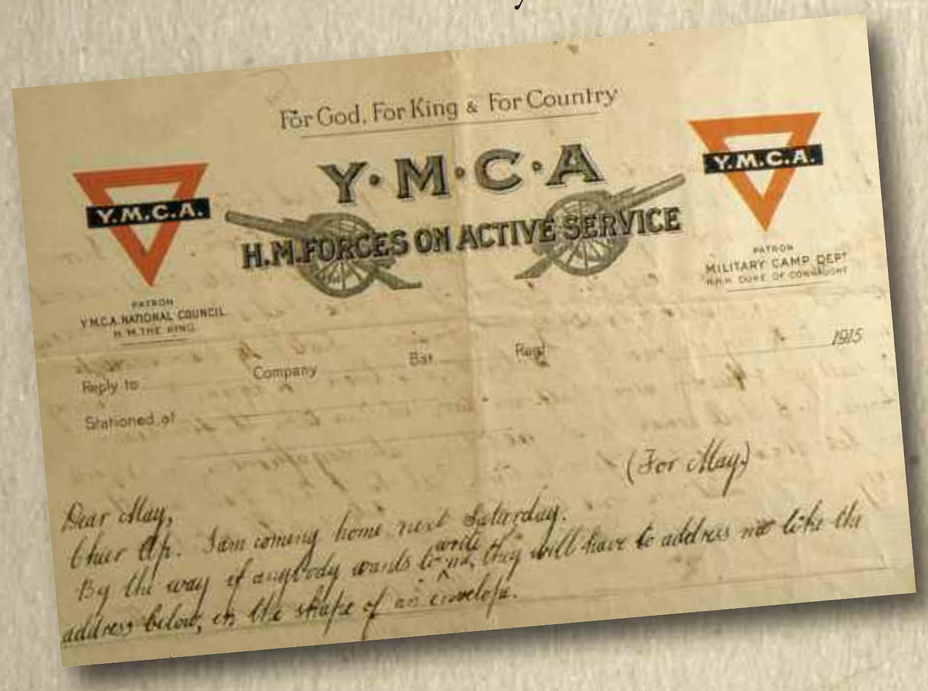
GREAT WAR MK

Living Archive MK music and film project

As part of the **Great War MK** project Living Archive Milton Keynes worked with young talented songwriters, musicians and film makers. All were given access to Living Archive's WW1 archive collection to inspire their work. They looked at diaries, letters, and photographs and listened to first-hand oral history testimonies.

This culminated in a performance in May 2015 where a selection of newly created digital stories, songs and poems were performed to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

The project provided a chance for the audience to celebrate and reflect on people's lives and the poignant and powerful stories that are still relevant today.



"It is wonderful to work with such a passionate group of young people and great that Living Archive has given them this opportunity to work together and perform live…"

Steven McDaniel – who mentored the young musicians.

www.livingarchive.org.uk

'Works on War' songwriters

Researching the archive

'Works on War' performance

The Living Archive Band

'Works on War'

GREAT WAR MK

Participatory Animations Project and community screening programme

Working with animator Rachel Wright, Independent Cinema MK has delivered a programme of workshops with schools and community groups to develop responses to the Great War through stop-frame animation. The animation project was inspired by research trips to Tate Modern's recent exhibition 'Time, Conflict and Photography' and to the Imperial War Museum. The films that have been made were developed from responses to the dramatic changes in 20th century artistic practice as a result of the impact of war: the poetry and stories of war-time; and how conflict affects the lives of today's children and young people. The children involved in the project ranged in age from 5 to 15.

Independent Cinema MK's community screening programme has captured the experience of cinema on the home front in 1915 using the adverts placed in *The Wolverton Express* (1915) for local cinema and Barber's Electric Picture Palace as a starting point for the project. The programme spreading across Summer and Autumn 2015 included silent films with live piano scores, a tour of the new animations followed by screenings of the feature films produced in the last 100 years on the Great War and its aftermath. The screenings took place in Wolverton, New Bradwell, Oakgrove School, Stony Stratford, Central Milton Keynes, Olney, Beanhill and the Irish Centre in Bletchley.

www.ic-mk.org

Barbers Electric Picture Palace, Wolverton (above) and advert (right)

'Hearts of the World', 1918, directed by DW Griffith

'War Horse', 2012, directed by Steven Speilberg

'Judith of Bethulia', 1914, directed by DW Griffith

'Oh What A Lovely War', 1969, directed by David Attenborough

'Paths of Glory', 1957, directed by Stanley Kubrick

Animation made by Home Educators Group, led by Rachel Wright

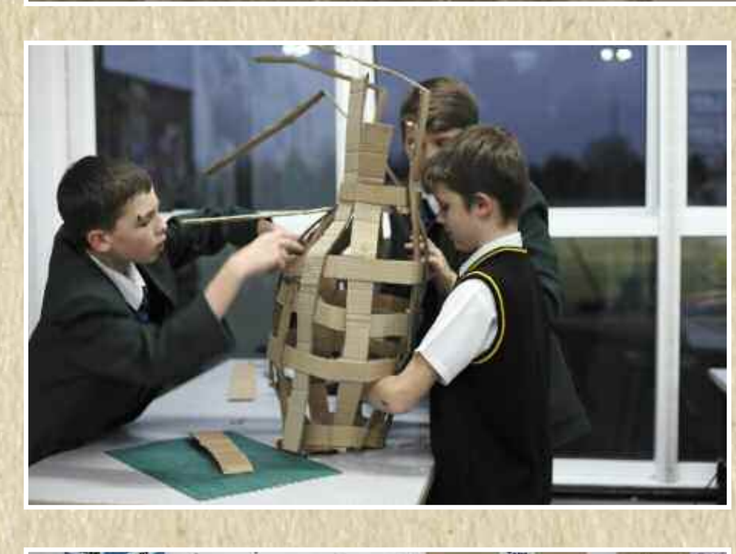
GREAT WAR MK

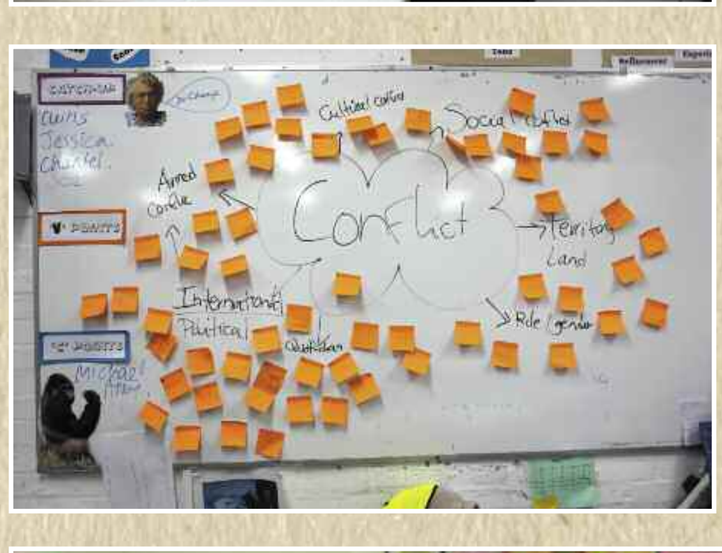
Frontline – MK Gallery

Since November 2014 MK Gallery artists Teresa Paiva and Alicja Rogalska have been working with students from MK Academy, The Hazeley Academy, Oakgrove School and Lord Grey School. They have explored how artists have used the visual arts to depict and interpret military conflict. The students have taken part in practical workshops, explored the work produced by different artists and have visited the Imperial War Museum.

These Key Stage 3 students, supported by artists Teresa and Alicja presented their ideas in a range of media from sculpture and painting to photography and film. The project culminated in a month-long exhibition of original work at MK Gallery's Project Space from 5 - 28 June 2015. Their responses to the theme have been wide and varied, producing a thought-provoking exhibition.

Students have also had the opportunity to achieve their bronze level Arts Award through the project.





www.mkgallery.org

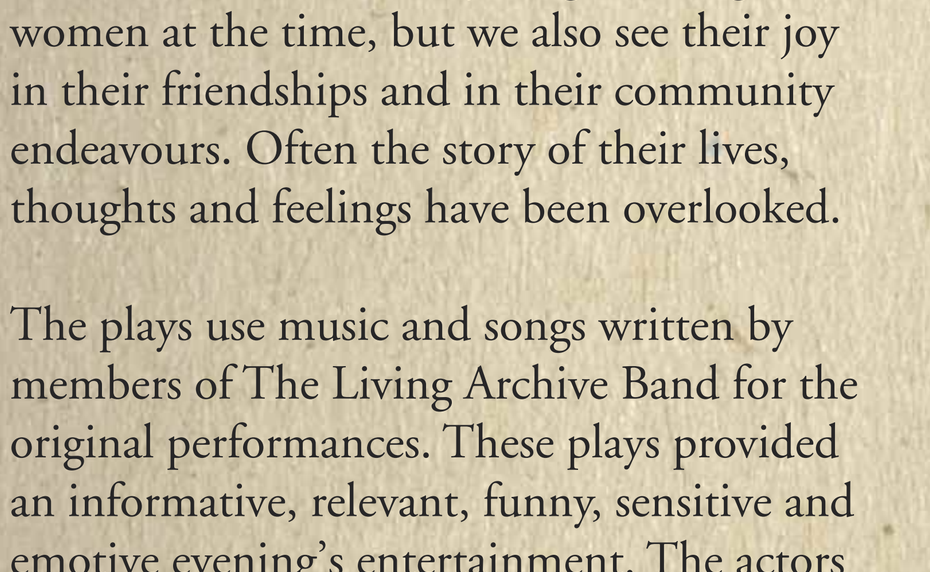
GREAT WAR MK

‘Your Loving Brother Albert’ and ‘Nellie’

Pepper’s Ghost Theatre Company produced and directed two well-loved community plays – *Your Loving Brother Albert* and *Nellie* – written by local authors. *Your Loving Brother Albert* by Roy Nevitt draws on the real letters of a young man from Wolverton, who joined the army at sixteen, and who died one week before his seventeenth birthday in 1916 in Belgium. The play is deeply poignant and touching and has a strong connection with Wolverton.

Nellie, written by Roger Kitchen and Roy Nevitt, also has a deep connection with Wolverton and New Bradwell, sourced by the diary entries of a young woman just before the start of the war. We see in this play the harshness of the lives of young working-class women at the time, but we also see their joy in their friendships and in their community endeavours. Often the story of their lives, thoughts and feelings have been overlooked.

The plays use music and songs written by members of The Living Archive Band for the original performances. These plays provided an informative, relevant, funny, sensitive and emotive evening’s entertainment. The actors were all from Milton Keynes and gave strong and moving performances.



www.peppersghost.uk.com

GREAT WAR MK

Simpson History Group

In Summer 2014, the granite war memorial outside St Thomas' Church, Simpson and the wooden Roll of Honour in the church porch were cleaned and re-lettered for the centenary of the start of the Great War.

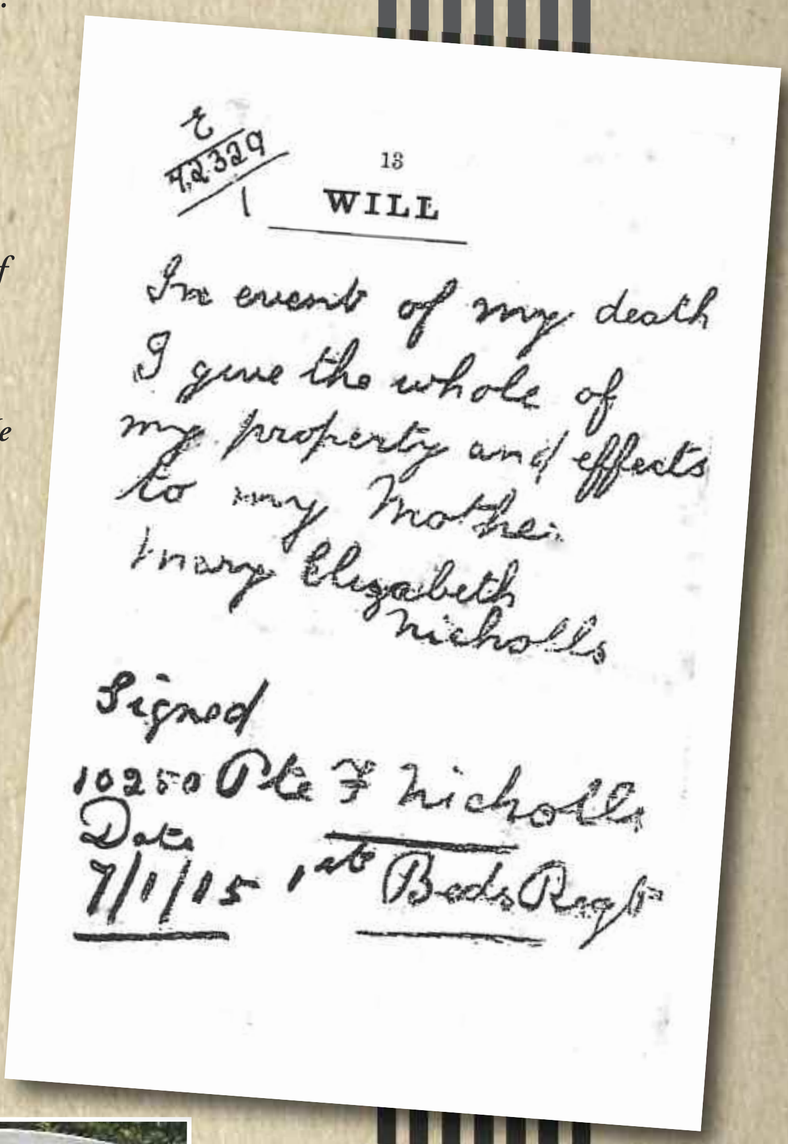
The names of the eleven men from Simpson parish who died in the war are again legible and that has rekindled interest in their lives. So far, Guardsman William Eaton, Corporal of Horse Arthur Rose DCM (Distinguished Conduct Medal), Private Frederick Nicholls and Private Christopher Baker have been commemorated on the centennial of their death. Flowers have been laid at the memorial and a short account of each man's life and death published.

This practice will continue until 2019 with the centennial death of the eleventh name on the memorial, Private George Bridge MM (Military Medal).

We hope that future Simpson residents will continue our respect and honour of those who lived here in times past.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal awarded to Corporal of Horse Arthur Rose after 'he re-occupied his trench after being twice blown out by shell fire'. Formerly a clerk in a paper factory, he joined the Life Guards before the war. He was born in 1888, died on 20th November 1914 and is buried in Kemmel French Cemetery, Belgium.

The badge of the 1/1st Buckinghamshire Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, the regiment of Private Christopher Baker. He was born in January 1894, died on 30th April 1915 and is buried in Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery, Belgium



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WILL

In event of my death I give the whole of my property and effects to my Mother Mary Elizabeth Nicholls

Signed

10250 Pte F Nicholls

Date 7/1/15 1st Beds Regt

The will of Private Frederick Nicholls, a former poultryman who enlisted with the Bedfordshire Regiment in June 1913. Invalided home in October 1914, he returned to the Western Front after three months in hospital. He was born 3rd September 1893, died 13th March 1915 and is buried in Ramparts Cemetery, Lille Gate, Ypres, Belgium

The headstones of Arthur Rose and Christopher Baker

Seine-et-Marne which where Guardsman William Eaton is commemorated along with 3,700 men who have no known grave

GREAT WAR MK

The Best Company

Festive Road has built a full-scale (15ft) Mark 1 tank out of wood, recycled materials and bicycle parts that provides the backdrop to a new outdoor theatre show. Inspired by real-life tanks at The Tank Museum, Bovington, and by first-hand accounts of those who attempted to drive them into war, Festive Road has also devised a piece of street theatre that takes place in and around the tank.

Entitled 'The Best Company', the show uses physical theatre to present an amusing, yet poignant take on a very real struggle as four friends take a WW1 tank into battle. As we see, life inside the Mark 1 tank is busy, noisy and smelly. Tension among the company escalates and a hilarious and bizarre internal conflict occurs.

This outdoor theatre piece has been performed around Milton Keynes and the ambition is for the tank to tour the UK and around the world between 2014 and 2018.

www.festiveroad.org

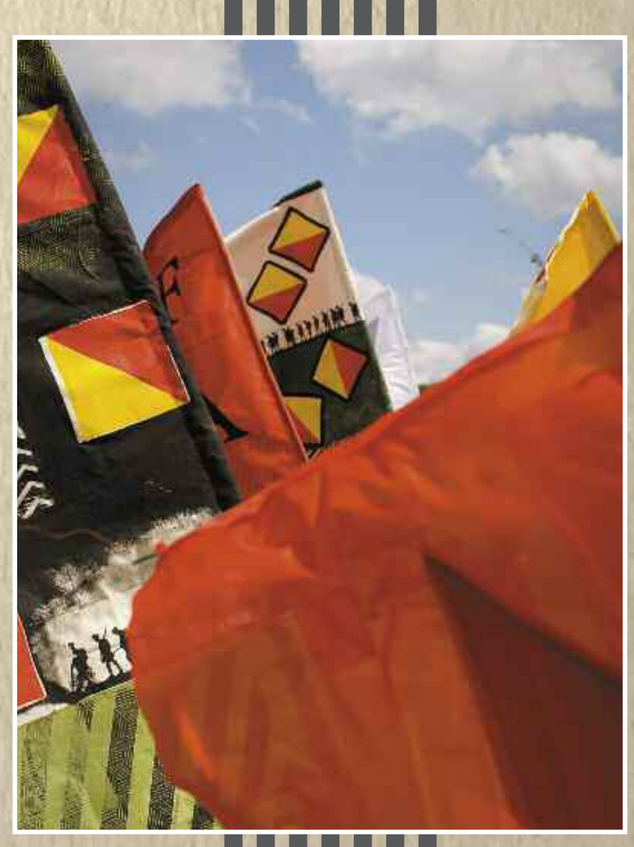
GREAT WAR MK

For the Fallen

'For the Fallen' used two creative disciplines to interpret the history and stories of WW1. Through textiles and dance, groups of participants have explored stories, memories and histories relating to different aspects of the Great War – channelling this information into a series of fantastic visual outcomes. Over 170 participants created banners which were installed at the MK Rose to form the backdrop for a large-scale dance. This included 11 different groups at all levels of skill, who together created a dynamic piece of work entitled 'For the Fallen'.

The commissioned artists and volunteers organised workshops and worked with a wide range of community groups, education providers and individuals to interpret memories and themes of WW1 through textile and dance skills. These culminated in an extraordinary vibrant and moving work combining the banners with dance performances in Campbell Park, followed by an installation at Westbury Arts Centre.

Feedback from participants (over 300) and observers (over 1500 people at the main performance) endorsed their positive experiences of learning new skills and the emotional impact of WW1. Several schools plan to hold exhibitions of their banners and performances of their dance pieces.



www.westburyartscentre.co.uk