

Annual Report

Councillor Liz Scott, Veterans Champion

I am pleased to submit my annual report to Council outlining my role and the activities I have carried out over the last twelve months.

The principal purpose of the Veterans' Champion role is to promote the interest of the Armed Forces Veterans within the Council and to take a particular interest in their needs and wishes.

It has been a busy, interesting and a remarkable year. A massive thank you to the members of Lancaster Military Heritage Group in terms of their support and hard work that has made my role encouraging and possible.

Here follows a short summary of my main activities over the course of 2015/16.

St Georges Day – 23rd April 2015

I attended a lecture at the University of Cumbria entitled "Gallipoli" given by Martin Purdy. This was the third lecture in the "The WW1 Centenary Lecture Series (2014-2018)". The lecture theatre was packed. It was informative and I learnt a lot about Gallipoli. The evening continued with an excellent buffet in the University's Restaurant.

VE Day – 70th Anniversary – 8th May 2015

The 70th Anniversary of VE Day in the Memorial Gardens at the Town Hall was attended by members of the British Legion, Public and Veterans. LMHG member Raymond Hirst played the lead role in this ceremony. Flowers were laid and we had a minute's silence to remember all those that died to protect us. It was a moving and emotional ceremony for most of us.

Westfield Memorial Village – 12th May 2015

I attended a tour of Westfield Memorial Village. The journey of the village was given by Martin Purdy. It was interesting to discover the background as to why the village was built in the first place. To rehabilitate soldiers and their families. The village is a forgotten gem in the heart of Lancaster. It is now owned by the Guinness Trust.

Radio Interview – 18th June 2015

John Barnes from Radio Lancashire interviewed me on the steps of Lancaster Museum about World War 1 walking trail "On the War Path". WW1 claimed the lives of more than 16 million people across the globe. The trail starts and ends at the Kings Own Regiment Museum which helped to devise and produce the leaflet. Within this leaflet, the birth place of Laurence Binyon is noted whose famous poem "For the Fallen" is used on every Remembrance Day services across the world and it echoes across the generations.

Flag Raising for Armed Forces Day – 22nd June 2015

I attended the flag raising for Armed Forces Day in Dalton Square as a pre-cursor to the start of Armed Forces Day. The event was attended by the Mayor, ex-Armed Forces Personnel and some pupils from Bowerham County Primary School. Later, the children and attendees went into the Town Hall for refreshments.

Armed Forces Day – 27th June 2016

On 27th June 2015, the Annual Armed Forces Day was held at Lancaster Castle. We had live broadcast from Bay Radio, Historic Guided Walks in the City, Army Reserve Forces, Women of the 40's Living History, Military Modelling, Cadet Displays & Assault Course and Lancashire ACF Cadet Corps of Drums. There were also other displays.

It was a sunny day and we had 1,666 people who attended the event. The Beer Tent and Lune Valley Jazz provided an atmosphere of a village fair. It was lovely to see some people dancing and enjoying the day. The generous Raffle Prizes were donated by local businesses. The fund raising was in aid of the Royal British Legion and Blind Veterans UK. In the evening we had supper at Storey's restaurant and Lecture given by Nigel Sale entitled "Waterloo" 200 years on. The Waterloo Secret Revealed just how the battle concluded.

Waterbird Project – 30th July 2015

As a member of the Military Heritage Group, I attended a talk entitled "The Genesis of Naval Aviation – and Pheonix Rising!" by Ian Gee, Director of the Waterbird Project. It is an attempt to recreate a piece of naval history established on Windermere a century ago and an attempt was due to be made in mid-September on the lake to fly a replica of Waterbird, the first aeroplane to take off and land on water in the UK. However, this attempt was shelved.

Drop in Centre for Veterans – 4th August 2015

I am aiming to initiate a drop in centre for our Veterans in Lancaster. I went to Lytham St Annes to meet Councillor Edward Nash to see the Hub that he has created for Veterans. It was a very interesting visit and I was able to make a connection. Currently, I am working with a lady from Arnside to realise the need in our district.

VJ Day – 15th August 2015

I attended a short ceremony at Lancaster War Memorial. There was a very good turnout of people and it was a very moving ceremony lead by Raymond Hirst the President of British Legion.

Music with the Military Concert – 22nd August 2015

I attended Music with the Military Concert at the Fulwood Barracks. It provides the military to share what is good about the Armed Forces and to raise the profile of the Army Benevolent Fund: The Soldiers' Charity, which provides vital support to Regulars, Reservists, their families and Veterans. The Concert was very well attended and enjoyable.

Walking Wounded – 16th September 2015

Lancaster City Council hosted an event and I welcomed the Walking Wounded into the City. The wounded service personnel were walking the length of the country on a "Walk of Britain" engaging with local communities to highlight the extraordinary determination of wounded personnel and to raise awareness of the work the Walking with the Wounded (WWTW) which was undertaking across the country.

There was a presentation by the Veterans and we had a question and answer session. It was a humbling experience to listen to them.

Battle of Britain – 20th September 2015

The annual Battle of Britain Service was held at St. Barnabas Church, Morecambe. It marked the 75th anniversary of this battle. The High Sheriff of Lancashire, the Mayor, Councillors, Cadets and Ex-Service organisations were present. It was an excellent service and as usual the uniformed cadets did their best.

Regimental Dinner – 28th October 2015

I attended the Regimental Dinner for the Duke of Lancaster's Regimental Association at the Clarendon Hotel, Morecambe. As we know, the Queen is the Duke of Lancaster. This regiment has a long line of Royal connection. The dinner, surroundings and company were most enjoyable. I gave a small speech of thanks and felt honoured to be invited as the Veterans Champion.

Remembrance Day – 8th November 2015

Remembrance Day on 8th November, did not see a packed Remembrance Garden because of the heavy rain. No matter, Rev Chris Newlands did an excellent job. The standard bearers, cadets and staff at the Council all did a very good job for all of us to show respect. Many members of the public also attended. The service at the Priory Church was well attended and our citizens showed their appreciation when they marched through the town after the service. Thanks to our local Police Force who provided the much needed security.

The Maritime War 1914-18 – 26th November 2015

The lecture by Professor Eric Groves on 'The Maritime War' in partnership with the History Department at Lancaster University and Lancaster Military Heritage Group was an educational and interesting. He explained the Maritime power of the allies and especially that of the British Empire. Most people believe that the war was won on the Western Front. Yet, the victory would have been impossible without the Maritime power.

Military Heritage Group – 15th December 2015

We had the Annual Military Heritage Group Christmas Carol Service on 15th December 2015 which was held at Lancaster Priory in the evening. It was attended by the good and great including our Deputy Mayor of Lancaster, Cllr. Caroline Jackson, who gave a reading. The Priory choir was at its best.

Commemorative Stone – 29th January 2016

Paul Cocker, Public Realm Manager, organised a commemorative stone for James Edgar Leach, VC, at Bowerham School, Lancaster.

James Leach attended Bowerham Primary School as a child and his father was a Colour Sergeant of the King's Own Lancaster Regiment stationed at Bowerham Barracks now known as the University of Cumbria.

The event was attended by the Mayor, members of the Lancaster Military Heritage Group, British Legion the Standard Bearer, Leader of the Council, Councillor Eileen Blamire and some pupils from the school. The children were interested during a chat given by Colonel Peter Dew and they were keen to ask him questions. They listened intently and understood the meaning of achievement and courage.

Military Heritage Group Annual Diner – 5th March 2016

I attended the Annual Lancaster Military Heritage Group's Annual Dinner on 5th March at Lancaster Golf Club. It was attended by Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis, MP PC, Chairman Commons Defence Committee as our guest speaker. Julian explained his role as Chairman and it was enjoyed by more than 70 people.

Fly A Flag For The Commonwealth – 8th March 2016

Given that I was born and brought up in the Commonwealth, I am always pleased to take part in the annual Fly A Flag For The Commonwealth ceremony. It was good to see several primary schools who came and enjoyed the event. The Ceremony was attended by the Mayor, Veterans and Members of the public. It is vital that the link is recognised and kept up.

Armed Forces Related Meetings

I continue to attend the WW1 meetings in Lancaster. The Armed Forces Board which is based at Lancashire County Council. This initiative is led by Councillor Darren Clifford and it is a great forum to exchange ideas, learn, share and discuss what we are doing in our own areas.

Steering Group – I want to pay tribute to the Lancaster Military Heritage Steering Group that I link up with for all the hard work they do to make things happen in our district. The Armed Forces Day events will be held on 25th June 2016 in Lancaster and on 26th June 2016 in Morecambe. The 2016, Armed Forces Day events will be spectacular. I am extending my invitation for all of you to come and enjoy the 2 day event in our district. Please support this event.