

# Youlgrave to Ypres

**Anne and John Cooper** report on a memorable and moving experience this summer.

Perhaps the first indication of the ambitious design for the memorial glass became evident with the glorious well dressing designed by Judith Orchard incorporating, some of the features together with the accompanying exhibition of the three quadrants of stained glass completed at the time.

The completed piece was displayed in All Saints Church for almost two weeks before the service of blessing and dedication was held on Sunday 12 August. Many people came to the church for this and it was a real community celebration, with the band playing for the hymns and a thought-provoking address and prayers by Reverend Louise. It was dismantled on the following day and packed very carefully for its long journey to Ypres for the presentation there.

Early on the morning of Friday 17 August, 86 of us, including 28 band members, left the village on two coaches bound for Ypres. We travelled on Slacks Coaches with our two lovely drivers, Tina and Jeff, and after a very smooth



crossing we arrived in Ypres in the early evening – just in time to catch a bite to eat and enjoy watching and listening to Youlgrave Silver Band playing in the



*John Cooper and Judith Orchard with the completed memorial at All Saints Church; and (below left) Judith's well dressing.*

main square.

Our hotels were in the centre of the city, within walking distance of good eateries and everything we were there to see.

The following morning we set off for Tyne Cot Cemetery, about four miles away, which enabled some of the group to pay respects to fallen family members.

Here also The Last Post was played at the Cross of Sacrifice by a band member on the WW1 bugle belonging to the family of John Dale.

Many thanks are due to the team who

stayed behind to assemble the structure in the Cathedral and who caught up with us later en route.

We then travelled to Poperinge where the Band played in the town square. After lunch we visited Talbot House (ToCH) museum. We all found this very moving, especially the chapel room in the attic.

The Band played in the garden whilst the rest of us enjoyed tea and cake whilst listening to them. They did catch up with the goodies afterwards!

On the Sunday morning it was a very excited party which went over to St Martin's Cathedral for a well-attended



Eucharist Service, followed by our service to present the memorial piece to the people of Ypres. We were all greeted in English and made to feel very welcome. Reverend Louise accompanied the trip and she officiated at the service with Father Matthias in attendance. The Band played a beautiful introduction and the same two hymns were sung here as were used in All Saints' which we felt was very appropriate and gave a real sense of continuity.

Reverend Louise's address and prayers were very well received and the service concluded with another piece of music by our Band. Afterwards we



*Youlgrave Band at Ypres Cathedral and (top) the memorial in situ.*

enjoyed a wine reception and a press call for their media, as well as many other photo opportunities.

Everyone was very impressed with our memorial and the whole event was filmed by the BBC. We will of course let people know when it will be shown – it may be a case of don't blink or you will miss it – but we have requested a complete copy of the film and we are hoping to show it in the Village Hall to enable people who were not able to come to share in the occasion – as well as people who did come and want to re-live it, of course.

We feel it is a testament to the quality and aesthetic of this art piece that it looked as fitting in the surroundings of our own parish church as it did in the grandeur of Ypres Cathedral.

We feel, too, that this is a real and tangible gift from our community, wrought through the many talents evident in it and the spirit of giving and willingness which has made it all possible.

It is a true and meaningful gift and we are all very much looking forward to the day half of it returns in October ready for the end of the centenary commemorations in November.

It was very special to have the Band



*The Band playing at The Menin Gate.*



*The team of Bellringers.*

playing in the Cathedral. To start the presentation service Kimberley Trickett created a calm, tranquil mood with a beautiful euphonium solo which was echoed by other instruments in 'The Benedictus'.

After lunch the team of Bellringers, organised by David Camm, rang a full three-hour peal at nearby St George's Memorial Church. For the technical amongst us this was a 5056 Spliced Surprise Major consisting six methods: 1024 Rutland, 864 each Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, 768 each Cambridge, Pudsey, Superlative, 137 com. Composed by R P Graves, it was rung by Alan and Christine Marchbank, Richard and Michael Angrave, Frances Haynes, Roy Meades, Robert Marchbank and Philip Graves. This was also the 40th anniversary of the conductor's first peal as a conductor.

Another high point in a very busy day was the evening service at The Menin Gate. This was the first event booked for the trip way back in May 2016 and it was for The Band to play here during the 8pm





remembrance service which is held every single day and has been since 1928 excluding the duration of WW2.

The Band played the gentle and appropriate 'Gresford' known as the miners' hymn (from a mining village) and then, as the wreaths were laid, 'Meditation on St Clement', arranged locally by the Band. This included a duet played on both WW1 bugles.

Wreaths were laid by David Camm on behalf of the Youlgreave Branch of the Royal British Legion and Anne and John Cooper on behalf of the Youlgreave 1914-1918 Community Group. Everyone on the trip was present under the arch, including both our drivers, which involved standing for an hour before the service commenced to get a place. It was a completely unique and emotion-charged experience which surely no-one there will ever forget.

On a slightly cloudy day we



embarked on a visit to three of Sir Edwin Lutyens' main memorials to the missing. The Australian Villers-Bretonneux where a climb up the tower gives extensive and expansive views over the rolling countryside – the scene of major battles and trench warfare 100 years ago.

As the day brightened the ride took us through the valley of The Somme with many isolated battlefield cemeteries over to the imposing Thiepval Memorial, finally on to The Arras Memorial (Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery). Amongst those commemorated on these are soldiers from Youlgreave Parish and family members of the coach parties. The WW1



*Visiting the memorials.*

bugles were called into service once more as The Last Post was played at each of these, the sound echoing through the generations. At the latter two personal letters written from The Front were read out.

It was a tiring but rewarding day and once more we were able to enjoy our evening meal outside whilst listening to our Band playing in the square. Some of the party enjoyed a last moonlit walk along the ramparts and through the illuminated Menin Gate before the journey home the following day.

We are sure there will be many return visits made to this beautiful city with its very special link.