**REPORT TO ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING ON THE WW1 CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS**

As you will know, Councillor Davies is a member of our small Steering Committee that has been addressing the matter of how best the village could, and maybe should, be commemorating this solemn anniversary. Unfortunately Robin is unable to attend this evening but he has left me the core of the text that he intended to deliver.

Thus we are pleased to advise you of the events scheduled to take place in Winsley over the long week-end of Saturday August 2nd – Monday August 4th next.

For information, the other members of this small working party are Phillip Bush, whose initiative it was, Ian Berry and myself. John Baxter and Linda Brooks have recently joined the Committee to extend our number to six.

**There are 3 projects taking place ahead of the anniversary weekend itself...**

**Firstly** we would mention the Commemorative Booklet, now in the planning, containing all the information known about the people named on the 3 village memorials - the Parish War Memorial and those in the Methodist Chapel and the Social Club. (The latter also has a listing of those who served but survived).

Committee members have all put some hours into expanding the areas of research required, but are particularly grateful to John Baxter and Linda Brooks for carrying it forward to the point where it now promises to be a most comprehensive work.

**Secondly** we are encouraging the planting of poppies around the village and thanks are due to the Gardening Club for agreeing to arrange this. We are also encouraging individuals to plant poppies around their houses – you may have seen the article about this in the April Weaver.

**Thirdly** we are planning to clean the three graves/ memorials to the First World War dead that are in the churchyard.

**For the anniversary weekend there are several events in mind...**

**At 7.30 p.m., on the Saturday there will be a film in the Village Hall**. We are certainly open to suggestions here but, currently, opinion would seem to favour either the 1930 or 1988 version of R.C. Sherriff's 'Journey's End' – an appropriate screen classic.

**On the Sunday** in place of the usual morning service at St. Nicholas there will be **a joint Service of Remembrance with the Methodists at 2.30** to which, of course, everyone is very welcome. This will be followed, at **3.45 by a wreath-laying ceremony at the War Memorial** led by our Chair of Council. Mrs Janet Cunliffe-Jones, representing a family who are the only known relatives, *living here now*, of those named on the Village War Memorial will lay a wreath in honour of all whose names appear on the various village memorials. Pam Bennett herself, representing the Parish Council, will lay a floral tribute on behalf of those now resident in Winsley, whose families (wherever they originally hailed from) suffered loss in the Great War. Other village organisations will follow and individuals will also be invited to place floral tributes or British Legion style miniature crosses on the grass around it in memory of others, probably family members, who had lost their lives.

Many of you will have had relatives who took part in the First World War. We particularly want to hear of those who lost their lives, so that they can be remembered by name at our Church Service and War Memorial ceremonies.

This would be followed by **tea in the Village Hall** kindly arranged by the WI.

**During both Saturday (10.30 – Noon) and Sunday (from 4.15- 5.30 p.m.) there would be an exhibition of World War One memorabilia** in the Village Hall (and we thank the Village Hall committee for their co-operation in this).

We are still earnestly seeking appropriate items – it is remarkable what has already come to light. ***If you have any such items that you be happy to loan (we are particularly short of the various WW1 medals), then do please let us know.*** Both Winsley Primary School and St. Laurence have requested that we make this temporary collection of memorabilia available at some point during the current Summer Term – This to assist in various associated projects that both schools are under-taking. Anyone concerned about loaning treasured pieces should be assured that displays of the exhibits will be manned at all times.

**At 2.00 p.m on Monday, August 4th, there will be a brief wreath-laying ceremony – on the 3 graves in St. Nicholas' Churchyard and, if they wish it, on the Methodist Church and Social Club Memorials.**

The actual anniversary of the outbreak of the war is, of course, **11 pm on Monday 4th August** and there was mention in the press a while ago of plans for **an official candlelit vigil** to be held at war memorials and other places up and down the country. However we are awaiting an advisory update on this. The feeling is that this should be an occasion for people of all faiths and of none but no final decision has yet been made on the exact format. Phillip Bush has been asked, by Chair of Council, to front this brief ceremony which would commence at c.10.45 p.m.

The final event will probably be on **October 4th** when there is to be a **concert of music and readings entitled 'Women of World War One' in St. Nicholas Church**; this is being arranged by Jackie Bevan of the Bradford on Avon Choral Society.

Other ideas such as a war poetry reading are under consideration.

We hope you will feel these are a worthy tribute to the Fallen of Winsley, and the relatives of those who live here now. We remember also those who also fought but returned home afterwards, many of them affected for the rest of their lives. The support of the village community over the weekend of the Centenary would be greatly appreciated.

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***With reference to requests for family members, who lost their lives in WW1, to be remembered by name on August 3rd, and offers of WW1 Memorabilia, please contact Phillip Bush. (01225 866624 or - phillipbush08@btinternet.com).***

*BOB WILLIAMS*