

Reflections on the War Memorial

By Chris Saint

Just imagine standing here in this exact spot 104 years ago, waving good bye to our young boys as they marched away to fight and protect our way of life.

Envisage turning the clock forward to 1918, when the lucky ones, some with life changing injuries, came back in dribs and drabs to Pett. They were looking for their homes, loved ones and even food. In many instances they returned during the night by themselves, missing their fallen comrades, with no fanfare to signal their homecoming. Even the local pub was closed for the duration. Victory for them was bitter-sweet having lost so many friends, having seen so many young men killed on both sides, having seen the senseless brutality and the unimaginable vision, of strewn bodies over mud and barbed wire. Imagine how lonely that must have felt.

It was shortly after this period, when money was hard to find, that Pett residents put their hands in their pockets. They privately funded this war memorial because they believed that future generations should have a constant reminder of those who failed to return.

Fast-forward the clock again to the present day, and we witness the same generosity of spirit by not only Pett residents, but also those who have moved away and others who wished to be associated with Project Remember. Local volunteers again offered their building skills; funding from public bodies such as Rother District and Pett Parish Councils was forthcoming and, just like before, the public was beyond generous.

We thank them all from the bottom of our hearts, because without such help, Project Remember would never have been able to restore this memorial to its former glory. In doing so we were able to record the names of the 10 local servicemen, who for some unknown reason, were not originally honoured.

Project Remember also brought out the best in us. People who might never have known each other came together, to share ideas and skills in pursuit of a common cause - just as the war brought soldiers together.

Those who died cannot be with us today; they have left behind their gift to us, a community which continues to work together in their names and beliefs.

Let it be known that the people of Pett will always remember them.

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